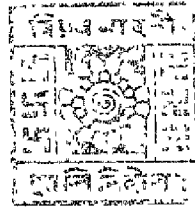


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FOUNDED BY  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE



EDITOR : KSHITIS ROY

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## VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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वर्ग संख्या.....052.....  
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: CHANDA,

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VOLUME XIII

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## ILLUSTRATION

Gandhiji at Ramdhun : Sketch by Nandalal Bose : Frontispiece

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Rabindranath Tagore

## POEMS

IN THIS VOLUME are published translations from the original Bengali poems of Rabindranath Tagore. They were all translated by the Poet himself, with the exception of twelve poems. They have not been published before in any book. References to the Bengali originals are given in the notes at the end of the book. The poems have been arranged in four sections which roughly correspond to four major divisions in the Poet's writings. The selection includes many songs composed by him during the Swadeshi Movement and ends with his last poems.

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WOMEN ARE OF TWO TYPES, the mother and the beloved. The one is like the rainy season, which tempers the heat, brings the gift of water and of fruit, and fills the life of man with plenty. The other is the spring which recks his blood into waves of ecstasy and makes heart sing. Man draws strength from the mother in woman and inspiration from the sweetheart in her. He needs one and desires the other. Where the two do not meet in the same person, his heart is torn into two and he is faced with a problem to which society offers no solution. *Two Sisters* is a study of this eternal conflict.

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## THE PARROT'S TRAINING AND OTHER STORIES

THE PARROT'S TRAINING is a great satire on mechanised education, of which the Indian child is a helpless victim. Big university buildings, piles of dead books, exports from overseas—the picture of the Golden Cage is complete. The Raja congratulates himself on so splendid an achievement. But the poor bird dies.

THE FOUR TRANSLATIONS presented in this book will help to draw the reader to an aspect of Rabindranath's art with which he is less familiar. These sketches illustrate his mastery in the medium of wit, intellectual detachment and irony mingle here with profound human feeling.

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By Nandalal Bose

## SOME MEMORIES OF GANDHIJI

HORACE ALEXANDER

IT IS NEARLY TWENTY YEARS since the late C. F. Andrews first introduced me to Gandhiji at the Sabarmati ashram. On my return to India two years ago I received a characteristic note in his own handwriting dated Madras, 31. 1. 46. It ran : "My dear Horace, Welcome. You will meet me when and where you can. Love, Bapu." Not one unnecessary word, but as warm a welcome to India as any man could wish. I have carried that letter in my pocket as a passport all over India for two years and the when and where of my meetings with him have been many.

My first picture of Gandhiji is at the prayer-ground at Sabarmati. I had arrived there one afternoon in March, 1928. After a rest I went to the evening prayers. When all were assembled, he came walking quickly, and sat down in the centre, and the chanting began. When the prayers were over, each member of the ashram gave his or her report of the amount of spinning done. This lasted for fifteen or twenty minutes, and was rather tedious. I noticed that the children ran playfully round the Mahatma while this went on, and he thrust out his hand as if to catch them as they ran past. During the following days again, I noticed what fun they had with him on the daily walk, where the children had him to themselves. Some years later one of those children, now a grown-up man, told me how difficult he had found it, as he grew up, to realise that the kind old man, so simple and friendly, of his childhood days, was the same as the Mahatma whom his elders held in such high regard.

That is my first picture of him. A few hours later, as I was retiring to bed, a messenger came to say that Gandhiji had enquired if I had all that I needed. In particular, was my mosquito-net properly fixed? Until that moment I was not even aware that he knew of my arrival. But from that moment, as many times in subsequent years, I realised that he was the perfect host, thoughtful for every detail of the comfort of his guests. Last year, for instance, when I spent a few days with him in the Noakhali villages, he said : "You must be prepared for discomfort, but we will give you as much comfort as we can". And, indeed, I felt rather embarrassed at the thought he gave for my comfort during those strenuous days.

Looking back to that first visit to Sabarmati twenty years ago there are several other things that burnt themselves into my mind, seemingly trivial, but typical of him. My first talk with him was fixed for 4 p. m. I did not bother about the exact time, and I turned up a few minutes late. I was kept waiting ten minutes. Then, when he was ready to see me, he made a characteristic apology, which was also a well-deserved criticism. "At four o'clock", he said, "I asked if you had come. As you had not turned up, I decided to have my food first, so as to waste no time". I recall one other incident from that first talk. A peasant from a neighbouring village came in during our talk, and prostrated himself on the ground. Gandhiji rebuked him sharply, and made me realise, as I did many times again in later years, how intensely he disliked all signs of Mahatma-worship. What he liked best of all was to find men who would treat him as a fellow-being, and who were prepared to disagree with him.

I had another example of his almost brutal frankness during that first Sabarmati visit. It was at the end of a six-month tour of India, and I was about to return to England. So I asked him if there was any special message that I should take to people in England. His answer was : "First we want you to get off our backs." At the moment I was a little disconcerted, but it was the kind of message one could never forget.

The last memory of those days illustrates Gandhiji's conviction that all life is one. You cannot say that some things are sacred and others secular, or that some things matter and others don't matter. As I was leaving, he encouraged me to write to him, and he suggested that if I had found anything that I did not approve of in the life of the ashram I should write and tell him about it. Then he pointed to a tap, under which members of the ashram washed their hands after meals. There was no drainage under it, so there was always a patch of damp mud. He said : "You may have noticed that. It is unhygienic. I intend to have it put right, but we have not much money at present." I said it did not seem very important. Immediately he replied : "No, you are wrong. Hygiene is not unimportant. We here believe that all life is one, and that true religion teaches us to attend to all these details".

My mind passes on to the months of the Round Table Conference in London, when I was more or less a member of his

family for a good deal of the time. For Gandhiji it was a bitter experience. The British Government, which had begun with such fair promises, had stiffened in its attitude. Day after day, Gandhiji, as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress, had to insist that the proposals the British Government was making were unacceptable to the great mass of politically conscious Indians. Not only was he engaged in this daily struggle with the British Government, but he was in difficulties with many of his Indian colleagues in the Conference, who had been gathered together by the British to represent every kind of minority group, many of them almost wholly insignificant. The communal problem, in particular, was being played up all the time by interested parties. Moreover, any number of people, and innumerable societies, were clamouring to meet him, and to get him to come and address them. His programme was always over-full, and as often as not he could not get to bed till midnight, though he was always up again soon after 4 a. m. for his prayers and then his early morning walk through the East End of London.

What impressed me most was his extraordinary patience and sweetness of temper throughout these trying months. He would spend hours and hours meeting politicians, journalists and others, trying to help them to understand why India was demanding immediate political freedom. He never showed irritation or frayed nerves or loss of temper. If even his own friends got out of temper with one another, it was he who gently, firmly and laughingly brought us back to our senses. I recall two incidents that will illustrate the conditions under which he lived. One day I happened to be sitting writing in his room, at a moment when all his secretaries and others had gone out. I noticed that he turned round and looked in the direction where Pyarelal usually sat. So I asked: "Do you want anything?" "No", he replied, "but it is so rarely that I am left alone that I could not help looking to see if anyone was in the room".

The two detectives who had been appointed by the British Government to look after his safety became his most devoted friends, and so did the domestic helpers who looked after the house where he had his office in Knightsbridge. Before the end of the conference he spent an afternoon visiting the home of one of the detectives in

south London. Next day the detective said to me : "I have had to look after a lot of busy men in my time, but I doubt if any of them were as busy as Mr. Gandhi, unless perhaps Lloyd George. But Mr. Gandhi is the only one of them who has found the time to visit me in my own home."

I see Gandhiji again in Sevagram, carefully explaining to the newly arrived visitor exactly how to use the new cheap but hygienic form of water closet he had introduced. There are pictures of him in my mind's eye in Poona and Bombay and Delhi, but I want to speak especially of some of the experiences in Bengal in 1947—last year.

After the wearisome and in some respects disappointing negotiations in Delhi and Simla, during the visit of the Cabinet Mission, it was refreshing to find him, among the village people of Noakhali. I see him resting for a few minutes in a village on one of his daily walks. The people have all gathered to receive him, and a Muslim makes a short speech assuring him that they will live together as brothers now. Then he is given a present of some oranges grown in the village. He calls the children, who come shyly forward, to receive an orange apiece from the Mahatma's own hand. And then the procession starts off again for the next village, the small boys racing ahead across the fields to stop in front of him a little further on and gaze up at him as he passes. Next day he goes to see a house that has just been rebuilt according to some official specification. The local official quickly discovers that Gandhiji is as well up in the principles of house construction as in most other practical arts that concern the village of India.

And so we come to Calcutta, to the house in Beliaghata and to the 15th of August. The noisy young men who demonstrated against him on the 13th when he arrived, have, after long talks on the evening of the 13th and the morning of the 14th been converted ; but there is still wrath in their hearts against Shaheed Suhrawardy, and at prayer-time on the evening of the 14th an ugly demonstration begins outside the house. It dies down for a moment when Gandhiji returns to the house from the prayer-meeting, but it soon begins again. Gandhiji gets up from his writing and goes over to the window, and has the shutters thrown open. He begins to speak in very low voice—so that only a few of those close to the window

can hear him. The others want to hear too, so they become silent. For ten minutes he talks to them and quietens their anger. Then he calls Subrawardy Sahib and the two men stand together while Suhrawardy begins to speak. Apart from occasional interruptions, the crowd listens to him in silence. While he is speaking news comes of fraternisation between Hindus and Muslims in the streets of another part of the City. This is greeted with cheers. Thus does the miracle of Calcutta begin. Next morning whilst Gandhiji is at his early prayers, through the darkness come a troop of young girls singing one of Rabindranath Tagore's songs of freedom, to greet the dawn of freedom and the man who has given his life to build India's freedom on firm foundations of truth and non-violence.

We have read in the papers during these last few days references to Gandhiji's writing-desk, his pillow, his Burmese hat, his charkha and other few personal possessions. For many months now one of those few personal possessions that was always on his desk as he wrote was a little china model of the three monkeys, signifying : "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." Every day as he sat writing or taking his food, and talking to all his friends and visitors, those three little china monkeys sat there, as a perpetual reminder to "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." And if ever a man lived up to that tremendous rule of life it surely was Gandhiji. Indeed, one might say that he went beyond it ; he literally thought no evil.

I suppose one reason why all who met him felt at once that he was a friend, even an old friend, was because he thought well of all men. He believed the best of us all ; and so, again and again, he called out the best. He has helped innumerable people to do things that they would not have been able to do if they had not known that he expected it of them.

But I must not suggest that Gandhiji was a sentimentalist. He was not one who shut his eyes to human failings. With his friends, especially, he was most exacting. If we failed in our trust or if we disappointed him in any way, he would be the first to call our attention to the failure, and he would expect us to admit it and to make the fullest reparation possible. He applied this to governments as well as to individuals. He had a great belief in the moral value of facing up to one's faults and confessing them. He saw that it



had a cleansing effect on oneself and a healing effect on others. And how ruthless he was with himself! Most of us, when things go wrong, look round for someone else to blame. I think Gandhiji always looked first to see how far he himself was to blame. And so, if he called any of us to task for some failure or mistake, we found that he was first of all blaming himself. It is easy to admit one's fault when the man you most admire, the most saintly of men, is saying : "I blame myself most."

So, there he sat, day after day, patiently bearing with us all, easing our burdens, making us laugh away the dark cares that we brought him, and trying to teach us to "see no evil in others, to hear no evil of them, to speak no evil", if possible even to think no evil.

One day last year Gandhiji wrote me a letter about the plans that were under consideration for calling together a world meeting of pacifists in India. In that letter he made a suggestion which some of us may like to take to heart now that he is dead—now that he has given his life for peace in India and for peace between India and Pakistan. He wrote : "May it not be wise for sincere peace-lovers to pray in their own homes every day if you like, even for five minutes at the same time throughout the world?" One way in which some of us might try to keep his memory pure in our own hearts would be by trying, day by day, in his memory, to spend five minutes at least in prayer for peace. Such a prayer, I suppose, would mean asking God to purify our hearts of all hatred and envy and greed and selfishness and bigotry, in fact of all the seeds of war. If, even for five minutes a day, we could do this sincerely, it would probably mean that our eyes would be opened to fresh ways in which we could become true servants of peace, in India and in all the world. Some are trying to do this at five o'clock each day, the hour of his prayers during the last weeks of his life, and the hour when he was struck down by the assassin. In this and in other ways we must try to carry on his unfinished work for peace and justice among men and nations.

Text of a talk given by the author at a meeting of the staff and students of Santiniketan on the eve of the Ashes Immersion Day, on February 11th, 1948.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FRANZ KAFKA

ALEX ARONSON

A NEW EDITION OF FRANZ KAFKA'S WORK (Schocken, New York, 1946) seems to call for a revaluation of his art as a novelist. An admittedly difficult writer, he confronts readers today with a technique of fiction writing to which they find it extremely hard to adjust themselves; and he seems to demand of them a peculiar mental discipline and attitude different both in kind and degree from those commonly associated with the reading of other "high-brow" novelists, such as Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, or James Joyce. That Kafka was a Jew seems to complicate matters a good deal; for, although no explicitly Jewish elements are introduced into his novels, yet the reader is constantly aware of something un-European, almost Asiatic in his novels, a certain breadth of vision and even of landscape so conspicuously absent in the over-crowded novels of modern Europe.

What kind of a world is it, into which Kafka introduces us? The first few pages of each one of his great novels, *The Trial*, *The Castle*, *America* seem to deal with reality in fairly conventional manner. In each one of them we immediately, in the first few sentences of the book, are shown the hero of the novel, a man of indefinite age (somewhere around 35, we may presume), called K. (short for Kafka, in all probability). The person of the hero never leaves us for a moment throughout the novel. In *The Trial* we hear of his arrest by some vague legal authority, and K.'s vain attempts to find out of what he is accused and by whom, and, lastly, we are given to understand that some incredibly complicated legal machinery has been set in motion to bring about his condemnation. The whole book is a sober, indeed most "objective" account of K.'s hopes and frustration in his search for an accuser, a lawyer, a judge; the gradual tightening of the ropes around his neck; his ever increasing solitude; his scandalous and profoundly irritating death by stabbing at the hands of two emissaries from the court clad in evening clothes and top-hat.

*The Castle* is an even more extraordinary story. Here we find K. entering a village one winter-evening. We are told that he has been called to the village by the authorities in the "castle" to

exercise his profession as a land-surveyor in their pay. From the first to the last page of this novel we are told of K.'s attempts to get in touch with these "authorities" who, it seems, are divided into innumerable offices, departments, and chancelleries with thousands of officers, deputies, messengers, uniformed or ununiformed. All K. really wants is to be officially notified of the kind of work he is expected to do. And just as K. in *The Trial* never comes face to face with his "judge" or his "accuser", so also in this novel K. never enters any of the chancelleries in the castle, although, in some round-about way, he gets a fairly thorough insight into the working of this huge and apparently perfectly useless administrative machinery. Towards the end of the book we find him still in the village, his faith broken, ready to commit suicide.

And in *America*, K., who is a young man here, is shown struggling against the system of commercial mass-production and all it stands for. We find him, first, an apprentice in a business undertaking of truly remarkable (though, by no means, incredible) dimensions, later on as a lift-boy in a gigantic hotel, and, lastly, as a mondescript "helping hand" in a variety show, compared with which the modern version of "Ziegfeld Follies" is child's play, called "Oklahoma". In all these three establishments K. plays an extremely subordinate role and is, naturally, excluded from contact with the "authorities", those in charge of the system, be it legal, administrative, or commercial.

This last point constitutes indeed one of the most remarkable features in Kafka's work as a novelist. The "authorities", whoever they may be, remain invisible, out of the reach of the individual K., who dwells within each one of us. Something like a holy terror, almost religious in its intensity, takes hold of the characters in Kafka's novels when they speak of the "Chief Justice", the "Count" in the *Castle*, the "Manager" of the hotel in *America*. Only in whispers dare they be mentioned. And when K., the hero, enquires after them, it is taken as impertinence and he is promptly punished for it. Most frequently he is simply laughed at for his simple-mindedness. For who could ever pretend, so argue Kafka's characters, to know the "mind" of one who stands at the top of the ladder. K.'s simple-mindedness is something extremely attractive; not that he is ever represented as stupid or over-inquisitive. The middle-

aged land-surveyor, the bank-clerk in *The Trial* or the apprentice in *America* are just normal human beings, not given to excessive introspection, demanding of life nothing more than it can give and has given at all times.

We have just now spoken of a "ladder", a kind of hierarchy, which seems to exist in all the novels of Kafka, and against which the hero, K., is fighting his solitary battles. The reader, only very occasionally, gets a glimpse of members of this hierarchy, such as when, for instance, a highly placed official from the chancelleries in the castle comes down to the village to interview certain parties, or when in the trial K. meets some examining magistrate who is supposed to be in close though mysterious touch with his "trial". The reader, therefore, moves throughout these novels at the bottom of the hierarchy, among messengers from the castle, washerwomen employed in the court, liftboys at the hotel. The hero hardly ever gets beyond them. The harder indeed he tries, the more he exposes himself to ridicule and the deeper he ultimately falls.

Kafka speaks of this hierarchy as existing both vertically ( from the washerwoman to the High Judge ) as well as horizontally. In every one of these three novels we find the hero, lost in long, dark, and smelly corridors which seem never to come to an end, corridors with secret side-entrances and exits, corridors opening into offices full of secretaries and files, with windows leading into dusty courtyards ; corridors which are evidently meant to deceive the visitor both as regards the direction he takes and his final destination. Indeed most of these nightmarish corridors have neither any definite direction nor any aim at all. They seem to exist for no other reason than to mislead the one who is out on some definite business ( meeting an official, for instance ), and they always achieve their purpose. Whenever K.'s stamina gives out and he is ready to lie down in some dark corner of one of those deserted interminable corridors some mysterious guide approaches him and leads him out of the labyrinth. It comes like a shock to most readers that the world outside, the town, the street, the room in the boarding house, still exist ; it is difficult to believe in the daily bustle of life that somewhere near those corridors a mysterious, but nonetheless extremely efficient, trial is taking place, a trial on which depends the life or the death of the hero. And yet K. is continually attracted by

these corridors with their many doors. Perhaps behind one of those doors the solution to his riddle might be hidden ; perhaps he might find, by a piece of incredible luck, the administrative officer in charge of land-surveying in the village, or the judge on whom rests the responsibility of trying him, or the manager of the hotel. And sometimes he is even permitted to open one of those doors and what he finds there is, probably, the nearest any novelist ever approached to a description of nightmare. As each "officer" is concerned only with his own department a very limited number of "cases" ever reaches him at all. Naturally he does not know what is happening in the department next-door, his cupboard full of files, all of them dealing with cases still "pending" and which await closer investigation. Despite the enormous power vested in him he is quite naturally unable to do full justice to each individual case. Indeed, the individual is liable to get lost in that accumulation of old files. The hero in Kafka's novels, for instance, is one who is in search of the "right" department and who, even when he finds it, invariably gets lost among old files, until by some inexplicable accident of chance, his "file" is rediscovered and judgment pronounced on him speedily, efficiently, inhumanly (as in *The Trial*). As a matter of fact, accident plays a very great part in shaping our hero's destiny : for out of the disorder of specialised departments there sometimes comes a "call for order", almost in the nature of a commandment from which there is no escape. What is perhaps the most extraordinary thing about it all is the fascination which K. (after he has been taught that simplicity doesn't pay) experiences when in touch with the authorities, the hypnotic compulsion which forces him again and again to confront what his reason tells him is the height of absurdity and extravagance.

Are Kafka's heroes, then, victims of some kind of hallucinatory hypnosis which makes them imagine the existence of a hierarchy before which they have to justify themselves? Did Kafka who created his hero and those weird legal and administrative mechanisms suffer from an inferiority complex, unfit, as he must have felt himself to be, for the ordinary process of plain living? Or was it simply that he was overwhelmed by his own insignificant littleness when measuring it against the infinitely complicated social and political machinery to which man in modern times is subjected in an ever

increasing degree, and tried to sublimate this experience ( common to every sensitive human being in our age ) in terms of artistic symbols easily accessible to even the lay-reader ( the Court, the Castle, the Village, the Hotel, etc. ) ? Or should we, perhaps, go further and suggest that what Kafka was aiming at was the inability of modern man to rediscover the faith in which at one time his whole life was rooted ; the breakdown of values, and especially of spiritual values, that characterises our age ; man's search after some final "authority" ( we may call this authority "God" ) and his inability to ever go beyond even the lowest representatives of this "authority" ?

There is some truth in each one of these suggestions, and there is no reason why Kafka's work should be narrowed down to some mechanical "literary" formula. Kafka evidently never meant to deliver a "message". He gave us the reality of life "as it is" ; and if life as depicted in Kafka's novels is absurd and extravagant, it surely is not Kafka's fault. What constitutes the nightmarish quality of his novels, is precisely his leading the reader across different levels of reality until he reaches the borderline between reality and nightmare : this borderline is usually reached in the first few chapters of the book. What follows afterwards is still told in terms of reality ( "of what really happened" ), and yet the reader is put on the defensive, he begins to wonder ; and he is carried away far beyond the usual "realities" of life when he follows the hero along those never-ending corridors in search of even the smallest glimpse of light from beyond the wooden partitions separating one "chancellery" from another. And as the final darkness closes in around the solitary figure, the reader has long ago—and without noticing it—passed the borderline that separates reality from nightmare. He, the reader himself, is K. ; it is he who stumbles along from door to door seeking admittance, it is he who experiences constant humiliation at the hands of some frivolous and irresponsible emissaries "from above" ; it is he who finds an ignominious death far away from common humanity to which he once belonged and equally far away from the authorities than when his search began.

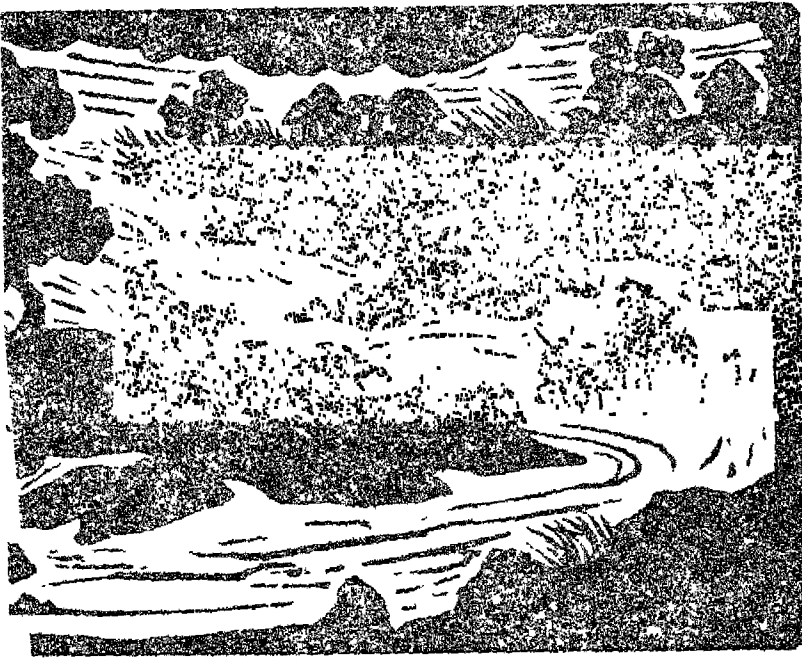
There is something inhuman about Kafka's novels. A sense of oppression, of sinister failure, never quite leaves us ( even not in his most "cheerful" novel *America* ). Only when we return to

reality, by one of the side doors which Kafka fortunately for us, hints at from time to time can we again breathe freely. And when once again we move among "common humanity", we may indeed wonder as to whether Kafka really "meant" it all. All three novels remain fragments : indeed, like some nightmare from which we suddenly wake up to find that it is morning and that the sun shines as usual through the window, and that there are birds outside in the garden.

That Kafka had the courage and integrity to give us the nightmare which is our spiritual life today, constitutes his significance in the history of European fiction. There is not one sentence in his whole work that sounds false. Any kind of intellectual pretension so common in the high-brow novel of today is foreign to him. "That's how I see your striving after truth", he seems to tell the reader, "Take it or leave it." And that he never attempted to idealise or to romanticise his hero, the common reader will never forgive him. For after having read through a novel of Kafka, he will find himself reflected in the hero, himself as he is, and without all the glorification of the common man which the "average reader" associates with fiction writing today. For K. is you, and I, and Kafka himself, the hero of a small and irrelevant drama on some suburban stage ( by no means in a Castle ) ; the scenery and the lighting are poor ; and the audience is liable to laugh at moments of tragic intensity ; and as for you, you stumble across the stage by some inner compulsion trying so hard to remember the words you knew at one time ; and you are fascinated by the laughter below and the laughter above,—until the curtain falls and you are left standing alone on the empty stage.

That the curtain falls at this particular moment, is mere accident. The unbearable absurdity and extravagance of this situation on the stage ( which is a village, a town, a country ) might have lasted some time longer. But then Kafka knew when to leave his novels unfinished. The falling curtain provided no solutions for the hero's dilemma on the stage. It only makes the unbearable bearable again. Like one of these secret side-exits, through which K. escapes into fresh air, the street, and birds in the trees. And the reader is grateful to Kafka to have shown us the nightmare—and the way to escape. For who is there among Kafka's readers who

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## THE STANDARD OF POLITENESS

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

PLEASE, SAID SROTASWINI, ask Byom to come properly dressed, as there is a ceremonial function in the house.

Upon which we all began to laugh. Dipti got rather annoyed and said,—No, it is no laughing matter; just because you don't warn him, Byom appears in decent society rigged out like a lunatic. Some social control in these matters is necessary.

Why necessary?—asked Samir, in order to amplify the subject.

Just as the poet rules the realm of poetry with an iron hand, replied Dipti, just as he refuses to condone any carelessness in the rhythm, any fault in the rhyme, any harshness in the diction—so also the ruler of our society should be equally strict with regard to our manners, behaviour and dress; otherwise it is impossible to preserve the beauty and rhythm of society as a whole.

If poor Byom had been a word instead of a human being, said Kshiti, I can confidently assert that he would never have secured a place in *Bhāṭṭikāvya*<sup>1</sup>; there is no doubt whatever that he would have had to depend on a formula of *Mugdhabodh*<sup>2</sup> for his existence.

I said—I agree that we should all combine to build up a society which is beautiful, well-mannered and well-regulated; but when poor absentminded Byom forgets all about this duty and departs with long strides, one can't help liking him.

One would like him all the more if he dressed decently, retorted Dipti.

Honestly speaking, said Kshiti, do you think Byom would look nice if he dressed nicely?—If the elephant had a tail just like the peacock, would his looks improve? On the other hand the elephant's tail would not become the peacock either. Similarly our friend Byom wouldn't look well in Samir's clothes,—again if Samir came dressed like Byom, he would be refused admittance.

The fact of the matter is, said Samir, whenever faults in dress or manners or behaviour indicate carelessness, ignorance and inertia, they appear repulsive. That is why our Bengali society is so

1 Well-known epic poem in classical Sanskrit by Bhāṭṭi.

2 Standard Sanskrit Grammar by Bopadeva.

lacking in grace. Just as ne'er-do-weels are outcasts in society, so is Bengali society cut adrift as it were from the society of the world. The Bengali has no common form of salutation like the *salaam* of the Hindusthani.<sup>8</sup> Because the Bengali is a member only of his home and his village, he knows only the relationships belonging to the home and the village; he has no connection with the rest of the world. Hence he is unable to lay his hands upon any code of manners for dealing with an unfamiliar society. A Hindusthani person can show politeness to everybody by a *salaam*, whether it be an Englishman or a Chinaman; but we can neither use the *namaskar* nor the *salaam* on such occasions—we simply remain uncivil. The Bengali woman is inadequately clad and always ill-dressed, because she keeps to the home; hence she possesses in a high degree the artificial modesty enjoined by the family relationships of father-in-law and brother-in-law, but seems to be totally regardless of the ordinary rules of decorum obtaining in civilized society. Bengali men too are supremely indifferent as to whether they keep their clothes on their bodies or not; on account of having moved most of the time in the society of relatives, a feeling of negligence in this matter has become ingrained in their very nature. So that an infinite amount of laziness, carelessness, self-indulgence and want of self-respect is apparent in the dress and manners of Bengalis, which no doubt bespeaks pure primitiveness.

But we are not ashamed of that, said I. Just as in a certain malady all that we eat is turned to sugar inside the body, so everything in our country, whether good or bad, by some strange process of mental aberration becomes transformed into food for the sweetest conceit. We are in the habit of saying that our civilization is spiritual, that it is not a civilization concerned with food and clothes; hence our indifference to all such material things.

Said Samir—Nobody ever thinks of criticizing those who are unmindful of and indifferent to lower things because of their constant concentration on the highest. In every civilized society, there is a particular set who live thus on the lone and topmost peaks. In ancient India, the *Brahmins*, occupied exclusively with teaching and learning, belonged to this class; nobody expected them to spend

<sup>8</sup> Hindi- and Urdu-speaking people of North India.

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their time in toilet and toil like the *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*. In Europe also there was and still is this kind of community. Let alone the clergy of the Middle Ages, even in modern Europe if a personage like Newton goes to a party without wearing the latest style of evening-dress, and if he doesn't conform meticulously to every detail of social etiquette, still society doesn't condemn him, doesn't even dare to laugh at him. In every age and every clime, a handful of great souls live in the social world but are not of it, otherwise they cannot do their appointed task; and society also refrains from requiring them to pay the petty taxes of social usage. But strange to say in Bengal, not only a few exceptional people, but the whole countryful of us, oblivious of all natural differences, are calmly straddling that high spiritual peak above and beyond society. We are very comfortably enjoying a holiday in slipshod clothes and extremely slipshod manners,—nobody has any right to criticise us, however we may choose to live or behave,—because all of us, high, low or middling,—wearing a short *dhota* and *girry chudder* are ready to merge ourselves in the unqualified *Brahma*.

At this juncture Byom appeared on the scene, his huge stick in hand. His dress was even more eccentric than usual, because, knowing it to be a ceremonial occasion, he had specially superimposed a nondescript *chapkan* sort of affair on top of his everyday clothes, from the sides of which parts of his ill-assorted under-garments were distinctly visible. We could hardly help laughing at the sight, and Dipti and Srotaswini felt properly contemptuous.

What were you talking about?—asked Byom. After giving him a partial gist of our discussion, Samir said—All of us in this country have donned the livery of renunciation.

Without renunciation no great deed can be performed, said Byom. Like shade with light, renunciation is constantly allied to work. The amount of work done by anybody in this world depends on his power of renunciation.

Said Kshiti—That is why, when the whole world was occupied in pursuing innumerable ways of happiness, the ascetic Darwin, renouncing those manifold worldly pursuits, devoted himself solely to proving that the monkey was the original ancestor of man. In order to gain this knowledge, Darwin had to practise a great amount of self-sacrifice.

If Garibaldi had not been able to free himself from many a worldly attachment, said Byom, he would not have been able to free Italy either. It is the strong active nations that know true renunciation. Those who rush again and again to knock at the hard, snow-bound gate of the ice-cold hall of death in the Poles—those who suffer eternal exile in the land of savage cannibals in order to bring them the gift of religion—those who at the call of their motherland, in a single moment arise from the soft couch of youth and wealth and friendship and plunge into unbearable hardship and terribly cruel death,—it is they who know the meaning of real renunciation. As for this lazy, squalid, supine, lifeless renunciation of ours—it is merely the torpid condition of a degenerate nation,—it is inertia, and nothing to be proud of.

Said Kshiti—This stupor of ours we take to be the ecstatic trance of spirituality, and remain overwhelmed with self-admiration.

Byom said—The workers of the world have to obey the severe laws of work, therefore in the course of so doing they may neglect the many small social duties,—but the idlers can lay claim to no such privilege. Society does not expect a long and complete polite speech from the man who is hurrying to office. When an English gardener takes off his coat and rolls up his shirt-sleeves in order to work in the garden, his aristocratic mistress need have no cause to feel ashamed. But when we, who have no work to do and nothing to occupy us, pass the livelong day smoking the *hookah* like an idiot in front of our house-door on the main street, with our clothes tucked above our knees and our coarse round belly exposed to view,—then what great self-renunciation, what high spirituality can we offer to the wide world as an excuse for displaying such uncouth barbarity? The renunciation which is not associated with some greater endeavour of attainment, is only another name for incivility.

Srotaswini was surprised to hear this kind of talk from Byom. After keeping quiet for awhile she said—As long as we members of civilized society do not always remember our duty of keeping up a standard of politeness, and do not try to dress and behave decently on all occasions accordingly, so long shall we neither gain our own self-respect, nor earn the respect of others. We have made ourselves exceedingly cheap.



Said Kshiti—If our price has to be raised, then our pay must be raised also, and that is in the hands of our masters.

It is not a question of more pay, said Dipti, so much as more mind. It is not for want of money that even our rich men live so sordidly, but simply on account of stolidity and stupidity. Those who have money think they must possess a carriage-and-pair in order to demonstrate their wealth ; but if you enter their inner apartments you will find them unfit to be even the cowsheds of decent folk. We are mindful of the equipment necessary for keeping up our pride, but when it comes to the question of things necessary for keeping up our self-respect, our health and our appearance, then we have no money. Our womenfolk never dream that it betrays low-class vulgarity to display one's pride of possession by wearing more ornaments than is necessary for setting off one's beauty—and money is never wanting for feeding that pride—but not the slightest alacrity is shown by them for clearing the refuse that fills their yards or the marks of oil and antimony that besmirch their bedroom-walls. It is not want of money, but the standard of true politeness has not yet been established in our country.

The chief reason for that, said Srotaswini, is that we are lazy. One can live in luxury if one has money,—even if one hasn't one can live like a prince on borrowed money ; but if you want to live decently you must renounce laziness and negligence, you must always keep yourself up to the mark of a high social standard, you must obey rules and practise self-denial.

But we think we are children of nature, said Kshiti, and therefore eminently simple. We are not at all ashamed of dirt, filth, nakedness and every kind of indiscipline. We are all natural and all spiritual !

Translated by Indira Devi Chandhurani from the original Bengali article entitled *Sabhyatar Adarsa in Panchabhut* or the Diary of the Five Elements.

## JHAVERCHAND MEGHANI—A TRIBUTE

C. M. SHUKLA

THE SUDDEN DEMISE OF JHAVERCHAND MEGHANI on March 9th, 1947 at the early age of fifty has spread a wave of deep sorrow over the whole of Gujarat and Kathiawar and has, quite naturally, focussed the attention of the entire Gujarati reading public on his works. A prolific and versatile writer, Sri Meghani traversed a number of literary fields with estimable success. Authorship for its own sake was, nevertheless, anathema to him, for his ideal was an unflinching devotion to the people and nothing that would not enrich or emanate from the root of humanity delighted his soul. His signal faith in and love for the masses, whose naive and artless expressions of thought and feeling he embalmed in inspiring forms of art, endeared him to them while the more sophisticated classes were drawn to him by the high workmanship, fervent sincerity and masculine grip of his works.

Meghani was born on the 17th of August, 1897 in Chotila, a village at the foot of the hills of Panchala in Kathiawar. His father, Kalidas Meghani, was a petty police officer and the boy's education suffered a great deal by the spasmodic transfers of his father from place to place. Rajkot was the chief soil of his infant growth and it frequently elicited loving references from him in later life. Here it was that he spent his childhood till he was eight. The utmost reach of his memory could not recede farther. The picturesque pageants of feudal life in Rajkot ensnared his impressionable mind. Yet his chief nurse during his boyhood and adolescence was Nature in whose midst the boy wandered far and wide—climbing hills, exploring forests, drinking from brooks, eating wild fruits. Imperceptibly Nature succoured his soul and patterned his mind, bestowing upon him that noble culture from which birth in a commonplace family had debarred him. With all his roaming habits, he did not neglect his usual studies. Matriculating from Junagadh he joined the Samaldas College at Bhavnagar where he sponsored a number of literary activities the most tangible and lasting fruit of which was the

In March, 1941 Jhaverchand Meghani delivered a course of four lectures at Santiniketan on the Folk Songs of Gujarat with illustrative recitals. Two of his articles on the subject were published, later on, in Vol. VIII part 4 and Vol. IX part 8 of the *Vishva-Bharati Quarterly*—Ed.

College Magazine. His own contributions brought him into lime-light being of a quality that bade fair for a literary career. After getting his B. A. in 1916 he went to Calcutta to take up a job in an aluminium factory. During his five years' stay there he paid a flying visit to England and profitably occupied himself with studying Bengali language and literature which later bore fruit as translations of the dramas of Dwijendralal Roy and the poems of Rabindranath Tagore. Displeased with his job he returned to Kathiawar to be a farmer and accidentally joined the editorial board of *Saunrashtira*. Meghani's literary career dated from this period.

Editorial duty or dignity could not deter him from plunging into strange assortments of people for the collection of folk-lore to whose resurrection and revival he had pledged his life. When *Saunrashtira* ceased to exist he joined *Fulbbhab* as its editor which post he relinquished only about two years ago. He also looked after the Kalam and Kitab section of *Janmabhoomi*, a daily newspaper.

Meghani's literary genius was recognised as early as 1928 when he was awarded the Ranjitram Gold Medal, a kind of Academy honour. In 1929 he was invited to lecture under the auspices of the Jnanprasarak Sabha in Bombay; in 1944 the University of Bombay appointed him to the Thakkar Madhavji Vasanji Chair; in 1946 he was given the Mahida Memorial Prize.

But Meghani was as much a man of action as of imagination. In the family of a police officer he was an anachronism born as he was with an irrepressible fervour of patriotism that could be traced neither to heredity nor to the community to which he belonged. A little before his death he noted in his Reminiscences with apparent fondness how as a child he once took away a glass lamp from Edward VII Jubilee illuminations at Rajkot to appease his infant resentment against foreign rule. This fledgling was in 1930 a grown-up warrior, a fighting minstrel of the motherland.

Such in rough outline was Meghani's life. I shall now turn to his works which mirror the real man of genius that he was.

The object proposed for the new learning foisted upon us, was to create a race of disgruntled Indians who would decry their nativity and look longingly to the remote speck beyond Dover as their cultural and intellectual Polyalbion. The new learning did create a

new class that often referred to Britain as their "home" without feeling the irony, and derested manual labour as well as the labourer. A mighty rift was created between the town and the country. Gandhiji's advent on the political scene with the consequent all-sided renaissance is the perspective in which Meghani's work is to be assessed.

Like the other parts of India, Kathiawar is rich in folk songs and tales ; but there as elsewhere, the heritage had, until recently remained buried under a pall of oblivion. In Meghani Kathiawar found a tireless devotee who willingly harnessed his life's energy to the rescue of obsolete and obsolescent aspects of folk expression. Meghani's life-work is to be sought not so much in his original achievement in fiction and poetry as in the enormous service rendered by him in the resurrection of the land of his birth. He sprang from the common stock, had his being in it and drew his inspiration from it, and was thus an authentic voice of the people, a creative synthesis of their emotions and aspirations.

To replenish the cultural treasure-chest, a return to the people is indispensable. Preservation of folk-lore is thus a vital necessity ; its revival a sign of mass-awakening. Ireland has much in common with us. Like us, it has survived through the ages by drawing upon the reserves of its potential energy in the people. In recent times, a considerable effort has been made for the revival of Irish folk-lore as a result of which the fossils of the past have blossomed into fragrant life, giving an impetus to fresh creative literature. What the pioneers of the Irish Revival did for Ireland, Meghani did single-handed for Kathiawar. Instead of busying himself with sleeping beauties and fairy princes, he plunged into the broad stream of humanity to bring forth its hidden treasures which he occasionally fashioned into imperishable forms of art.

In his historic letter to Lord Irwin, Gandhiji referred to Meghani as the national poet of Gujarat. The description is most appropriate. Both in reality and imagination, Meghani identified himself with the masses. His collection of poems is a poet's testament of faith, a poet's register of his reactions to the panorama of sorrows and struggles in contemporary life. With all his sensitiveness, Meghani was never an escapist, although time and again he drew inspiration from the mother's dim recesses like a true child of the earth.

From another point of view also does Gandhiji's appellation apply admirably to Meghani. He voiced, as none else, a vital phenomenon of our national awakening, the awakening of the masses. In fact, he helped considerably in making the people shake off their self-complacency and respond to the call of the country. He himself jumped into the struggle for liberty, body and soul, and, while his physical self was smarting under shackles, his relentless soul burst into rousing war-songs. Without meretricious art this poet-patriot composed paeans of persistent resistance and patient inoffensive endurance, whose lyric lift and infectious fervour, whose concentrated poignancy and soul-stirring sentiment elevated them into magic mantras of unflickering inspiration. They were in every mouth. Never since the days of Chand Birdai, had patriotic balladry instilled such heroism in the masses and the classes alike. It was left to Meghani to be the greatest patriot-poet of modern Gujarat.

Nature had gifted him with an enchanting voice capable of remarkable modulations. Like Tagore's his was a rich soft reed voice almost ethereal and bird-like, expansive and mellifluous. Whenever, therefore, he sang, a spell seized the audience. There is an illuminating anecdote in this connection. Once when he was sentenced to imprisonment for non-violent disobedience, the only favour he asked for was the permission to sing a song in the court. The hall was packed, but the Magistrate, innocent of Meghani's inspiritive melody, acquiesced. After all it was a very simple request. As the famous song, "Our agonies are a thousand years old", emerged from his throat, silence reigned in the court. Every eye was flooded. The Magistrate, too, was in tears like the other listeners. Such was the witchcraft of the minstrel's melody.

In the high tide of patriotism, there was scarcely any time to bother about originality of invention. The moment made imperative demands which the bard of freedom had to fulfil promptly. Meghani abundantly resorted to translation and adaptation. Surprising it is that the originals became embellished by his touch even in the hurried process of their change. Drawing them from their recondite recesses he transmuted them into deeply moving war-songs.

Tagore was Meghani's Parnassian spring. The latter had drunk deep of him in the original, had felt the throbs which Tagore's multitudinous metrical variety always creates and had resolved, a

catholic artist that he was, to transfer his enjoyment to his less fortunate readers in Gujarat. *Rabindra Veena* is one of the most successful collections of translated poems. Meghani's metrical art was put to a most trying proof in this work and it came out of it laudably.

Ever since the time of Narsinhrao Divetia, Gujarati poetry has more and more alienated itself from the people and has in the present age been a monopoly of the few. There have been exceptions but deplorably few and far between. While the over-wrought poets were furiously spurring the exhausted Pegasus to fly, Meghani came as a fresh breath of Elysian air and quenched the parched throat of the public. Here is the ideal he had set up to himself, an ideal fit to be carved in gold :

"Poetry is a true art. Whatever burden of intentions you may place on its shoulders, its primary function is to flood the otherwise dull, oppressed and dry life of humanity with joy and zest".

No art that was cut off from the people was acceptable to him, much less poetry. True poetry, he asserts in a happy metaphor, rains over the entire earth and having rained percolates into every single layer and so doing spreads beauty both within and without. Many a proud poet will do well to take a leaf from Meghani's book. He heralded the new culture that is coming into being, the culture of the all and not of the few. Thus was Meghani not only a chronicler of the day ; he was a prophet and an architect of poetic taste also. Not simply in the upper strata of society or intellect but in the permanent root of the earth is poetry to seek its mainspring.

Yonder a man harrowing clouds  
In a slow silent walk,  
With an old horse that stumbles and nods,  
Half-asleep as they stalk.

In many respects does Meghani remind one of Thomas Hardy, 'the greatest of the Moderns' in England. Of course, philosophically he is antipodal to Hardy, though not a bland optimist. Modest and unassuming, he lived among the people as one of them in the countryside. Towards the end, declining fat salaries, he lived in a village dedicated to secluded study and silent creation.

During a life-time of fifty years he gave seventyfive books to Gujarat, each one of high literary value, which in itself is an eloquent testimony to the fecundity of his creative power. By far the major part of this contribution is in the realm of fiction where the larger canvas furnishes a scope for a fuller delineation of life. Meghani, the novelist or story-teller, rummages the past, observes the present, ransacks the nooks and corners of Kathiawar and Gujarat and skips over to Burma. But he is at his best when he plants his feet on the ruins of the past. His imagination, aglow with the white heat of intensity, recreates the glory that was Kathiawar in the pages of his historical novels. It is a noble cavalcade that passes before us—heroic men and women toying with and defying death to maintain the eternal verities of life; outlaws, towers of strength indeed, whose outlawry is a self-imposed austerity for the re-establishment of justice and humanity in State and society; saints who are a ballast to wandering barks. It is a world teeming with courage, heroism, nobility, romance and humanity. Life burns so transparently effulgent in it that ours in comparison appears a pale livid streak. One certainly feels how much of the depth and strength of life has been sacrificed in the search for selfish security, euphemistically called culture.

The social novels of Meghani are in a class with the other novels of this category in our language. It is, indeed, most difficult for any writer to work wonders in the over-ploughed field of fiction. Nevertheless, as a master of sentiment and atmosphere, Meghani keeps up here also a distinctly high level of art. His attachment to the proletariat makes him a sensitive chronicler of the ailments and grievances which their flesh is heir to. Pathos is his forte; yet his delineation of it is never manipulated or tame. He awakens our dormant sympathies and works a kind of Katharsis in them. If Anatole France's apothegm, "Genius is sympathy", has any meaning, Meghani is a genius of the first rank.

In the general mosaic of his works Meghani's short stories glitter as precious little gems. "Infinite riches in a little room" is what one would justly say about them. *Vilopana* or Immolation, his last publication, is a sheaf of autumnal mellowness. Story after story avouches the author's deep probings into the tangled cosmos of human emotions and relationships. Of all the

stories in the collection *Vilopana*, which furnishes the title, is easily the best. In fact it is so superb in workmanship and so deeply moving that it can rank with the choicest short stories of the world. In our own language it is unique. The mystic soul of India, which aeons of agony have not been able to smother to death and which throughout has nursed the country on the very waters of its tribulation, unfolds its perennial potency in this story. Here is sublimity in a narrow compass. What a pity that Atropos snapped the thread that could weave such patterns to perfection !

No wonder that this author, the governing principle of whose art and life was allegiance to truth, limited himself to the range of first-hand experience. Not expanse but depth is the salient quality of his writings. *Mavsa na deeva* Lamps of Humanity, to which was recently awarded the Mahida Prize, as the best book of the year, takes us into the inmost shrine of the author's unqualified trust in the eternal goodness of human nature apparently at its lowest. Incidentally, this award was responsible for Meghani's last appearance before the public for latterly his failing health had made him averse to large gatherings. Unconscious of the approaching end, Meghani poured out his very soul that evening in a reverberating tone. As an orator he was, as usual, far above the constellation of eminent Gujarati writers who surrounded him on that occasion. That oration, however, was destined to be his swan-song as it was also to be his last avowal of a life-long faith. "The people is my mother", he said over and over again that day.

Time alone can be the true touchstone of art in the last resort but there is not a shadow of doubt that Meghani will live as long as man continues to love man and mother earth. Rich it is to die as he died, clad in the glory of love and approbation ; and who can say he is dead ? But Gujarat's grief is a mother's grief for the loss of a son whose pen was her pride, whose life was her joy.\*

\* Based on a talk given by the author to the Rotary Club of Baroda.



## SILPASADHANA

NANDALAL BOSE

ACCORDING TO THE UPANISHADS THE UNIVERSE is a projection of ananda or cosmic delight. The delight supports and comprehends all human joys and sorrows and yet transcends them. The creation of the human artist too is for the joy of creation, and it is this standard which determines the genuineness of an art-object. For, if a painting or sculpture owes its origin to this creative delight, it will surely communicate its own taste of joy to others. A real work of art knows no death. If all the frescoes and sculptures of Ajanta and Ellora were to disappear, they would not really die. For, in the mind of the art lover they will live for all times. If a single artist has looked at them, their truth will influence and live through his work. Thus it comes to this that in so far as art is creation it follows the laws of all living things. It is continuous down the stream of generations...

Many years back Professor Geddes had visited Santiniketan Asrama. At that time some of us were trying our hands at fresco painting. For want of the right kind of materials and not knowing the technique well enough we gave up the attempt after a while. Professor Geddes was disappointed at this. He told us : "Why shouldn't you go on with your work ? Even if you have to work with a piece of charcoal, and the work you do is good and a single person happens to look at it and like it, your efforts will have been rewarded. Whereas if you sit idle and disconsolate, all your ideas will rise and vanish with you, even you will not know them sufficiently well nor will they be available for others....."

The aim and endeavour of all the arts are the same. Poetry, sculpture, painting, dance, music, each of them, through a rhythm peculiar to it, tries to capture the rhythm of joy which is the essence of all manifestation. In this respect there is a parallel between the pursuits of art and yoga. In spiritual sadhana the search is for the Unity of creation at the heart of the diversity—the search is for the One by knowing which one knows the All. In a similar fashion art

too moves towards a vision of unity. A Chinese artist has said : "To a genuine artist the image of godhead and a blade of grass both carry the same value ; they have in them the power to inspire the same aesthesis." This will show how comprehensive is the artist's concept of unity. Of course this does not imply any disrespect for the image of the god, it only shows the need for the same respect towards the blade of grass.....

In the pursuit of his art the artist becomes completely impersonalised. As an individual he has his disposition, desires, sentiment etc. At one moment he is moved by an impulse and at the next, in his attempt to create, he frees himself from that ; then he does not have any desire or attachment with regard to the subject, and the keenness of his individual perception takes on an impersonal character. At the time of creation the artist transcends the limits of his personality, and his subject too changes from the merely emotional to *rasa* or the delight of pure sensibility which is the bliss of being.....

The artist may depict scenes that are tragic and heartrending or he may take up a theme that is pleasant. But he is not attached or affected by either. Transcending the environment, happy or unhappy, the artist moves towards the *rasa* at the root of being and tries to create a body for the same. If something is created which is not out of or without reaching this *rasa*, then that creation will be disfigured by its sorrow as well as by its pleasure. So, it is evident that the tendency for the artist and the *sadhaka* is the same ; both aspire after and achieve a pure and unmixed universal bliss. The artist's *sadhana* is through the medium of his own technique without following any other method of prayer or ritual...

Let me take a special example. The man who in his meditation first saw the image of Kali or Nataraja was an artist, even if he were a *sadhaka* he was an artist ; and the man who first gave it form he must have been a *sadhaka* in spite of being an artist. For both have created through a unique *rasa* the image or composite form of colour, movement and rhythm, or else it has been revealed to them...

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At different times and periods of life the artist's sensibility is swayed by different emotions and inspirations. It has been seen that the work of the same artist rouses in the mind of the connoisseur divine vibrations while his other works may be of an inferior order of evocation and inspiration. People are surprised, but there is really nothing surprising in this ; with change in mood and environment the artist becomes a different person. At the moment of his creation when he has the experience of *rasa*, knowing the mystery of form and rhythm he has within his grasp the highest state of consciousness available to mortal man ; but such moments are necessarily rare. The artist floundering in the ooze of the everyday world, there are lapses from this high state. To integrate life in its entirety with the rhythm of eternal Delight is what the artist aims at, but the aim is not always fulfilled....

In order to reach the supreme experience of *advaita* the *sadhaka* has to move through different stages. The self-expression of the artist also follows the same route. But to the strict *advaitin* it may seem that whatever has to be discarded in the path of *sadhana* is transitory and insignificant, so what can be the point of art in dealing with these illusive materials ? To which the artist's reply is, *maya* or illusion is the basis of the artist's creation, but *maya* does not delude the Creator. As Sri Ramakrishnadeva used to say, the poison of the snake does not kill the snake. The artist in making conscious use of *maya* turns it into *lila*. Whether the theme or subject is apparently trivial or great, transient or eternal, the artist's *sadhana*, his fulfilment is in being able to feel and express the unity running through all these diverse phenomena. An attachment to the theme is the thing to be feared, that is the slavery to *maya*. The artist's vision sees *maya* as the swing of the multitudinous rhythm in the heart of the Single....

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can inspire the artist to create an object that may help thousand others to rise beyond their limited notions to wider and purer aesthetic appreciation. Particular themes or subjects may be condemned by people but the magic of the brush will reveal something transcendent and unique. It depends entirely on the artist's attitude and subtlety of perception if his theme shall founder in the region of moral good and evil or rise higher. The Upanishads declare : "By the Self one knoweth taste and form and smell, by the Self one knoweth sound and touch and the joy of man with woman ; what is there left in the world of which the Self not knoweth ?" <sup>1</sup> So there is nothing good or bad inhering in the object as such. If the artist can realise in himself and re-create the pure bliss or *rasa*, out of which the Creator weaves his manifestation and has His joy in it, then poison can yield the delight of *amrita*. The artist who loses himself in his attachment for a theme or object cannot transform it into a thing of joy—one gets the external fact or situation only, and the mind does not find its extension or liberation through *rasa*. When the physician's attention is more on the patient than on the disease the chances of cure become remoter...

But still the question remains, if the portrayal of themes which have been considered immoral by the standards of society does not injure society. My submission is that whenever the artist's work has been truly fulfilled, emotion has been transformed into *rasa*, the realism of the moment has been related with the rhythm of the eternal ; the artist equally with the appreciative audience has been freed from the isolation of the object ; of intellectual habits and social suggestions ; even superficially the result of this is social good and not evil.

Some years back there had been a talk of doing away with the erotic figures on the outer walls of Puri and Konarak. A dangerous proposal ! With their destruction some of the highest works would have disappeared for all times. I cannot say for a certainty why the sculptors had chosen these particular themes. Scholars explain it differently. Of the play of the nine *rasas* in human life this is one, the primal or *adi rasa*. This can be said without doubt that as art products these figures are indeed of a high order....

1 Katha Upanishad, II. 1, 3. Sri Aurobindo's translation.

At different times and periods of life the artist's sensibility is swayed by different emotions and inspirations. It has been seen that the work of the same artist rouses in the mind of the connoisseur divine vibrations while his other works may be of an inferior order of evocation and inspiration. People are surprised, but there is really nothing surprising in this ; with change in mood and environment the artist becomes a different person. At the moment of his creation when he has the experience of *rasa*, knowing the mystery of form and rhythm he has within his grasp the highest state of consciousness available to mortal man ; but such moments are necessarily rare. The artist floundering in the ooze of the everyday world, there are lapses from this high state. To integrate life in its entirety with the rhythm of eternal Delight is what the artist aims at, but the aim is not always fulfilled....

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Hindu ideals and traditions. At one time I had painted exclusively the figures of gods and goddesses. Now however I paint the events of daily life as well as divinities ; I try to take the same joy in both. Formerly I thought that the conception of divine forms was higher than that of everyday human life and of sensible things. With mental maturity I do not now emphasise the importance of forms of things ; I see in each of them the divergent rhythm and image of the same Being. The great globe, all the forms in and outside the mind, the Prana in which all this universe of motion moveth and from which also it proceeds<sup>2</sup>,—I try to see that Rhythm of Life in every form, common and unusual. In other words, previously I sought for divinity in the image of the gods, now I try to find it in 'sky, water and mountains'.<sup>3</sup>

In all ages and countries great ideas and ideals have been the motive spring of art. Mediæval Europe had the ideal of Christianity, India of Krishna and the Buddha, and the Chinese of Tao. But when a personality comes to be worshipped as the image of an Idea, it obscures the idea ; in the long run people either forget or misunderstand the root idea ; the light of conscious joy is not reflected on the environment, it is ignored. That has been the case in India. In all ages the sadhakas have seen the image of Kali or Siva in Nature ; now, screened by the images, we have forgotten to see that boundless Nature itself. "All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is is individual universe of movement in the universal motion"<sup>4</sup> — initiated in this mantra of the Upanishad, the future art of India will look at the world with the vision of truth and create anew.\*

2 Katha Upanishad, II, iii, 2.

3 Used as synonym for landscape painting in Chinese.

4 Isha Upanishad, I.

\* Translated by Sisirkumar Ghose from the original Bengali article appearing in *Upanishad-Katha* published by the Visva-Bharati.



## TAGORE'S THEORY OF LITERATURE

PRABAS JIBAN CHAUDHURY

TAGORE'S THEORY OF LITERATURE is not didactic, it is educational. He was against the moralists in literary philosophy yet he had no sympathy for the pure aesthete crying the slogan : Art for art's sake. Literature was for him a discipline which led man to some goal, moral and spiritual, it was never an end in itself. He did not conceive Beauty as a value distinct from Goodness ; nor did he regard self-expression as an absolute criterion of true literature ; expression, he held, must be judged with close reference to the thing expressed, the content being more important for him than the form. Tagore's theory of literature is one of significance ( content ) rather than of form. So that he judged literature by standards other than the purely literary ones. Like I. A. Richards he believes that we should rather see how different values stand in relation to each other than isolate them. With Mathew Arnold Tagore is one in holding literature to be for life, to be, in fact, a 'criticism of life' in a very broad and refined sense.

That is to say this criticism must be self-distinguished from moralising. Tagore resented a didactic theory of literature. To the question : What will happen to moral training if literature does not accept this task ? his reply was : In no country has literature ever taken up the job of school-masters. Literature as a moral teacher is of course useful but literature is good and goodness is not exhaustively defined by its use value. Goodness is beauty, "the moralist declares its value from the ethical standpoint, the poet seeks to make manifest its unutterable beauty." Literature is not to be valued for any direct service it may render to the cause of morality or utility which it nevertheless serves in its own rather indirect and subtle way. In other words, literature transcends, without negating, pragmatic values including moral ones.

But what are the higher values implied by Beauty and Goodness for which literature stands ? The significance of literature lies in three main values, the triple ends towards which literature proceeds. These are—union of man with the rest of the universe, knowledge of human nature and self-realisation or soul-knowledge.

The instrument of reaching the first two ends is imagination and that of reaching the last one is mental discipline—*sādhana*. Clearly enough, Tagore gives us a concept of literature which is educational; literature will teach us of nature, man and the human soul.

The first significance of literature consists for Tagore in the union of man with nature outside him, a union which literature attempts to forge. There is in man an inherent craving for such a union; he cannot rest content with a world that looks strange and inhospitable and into which he has been hurled willy-nilly, a thing surprised. Man has an instinctive notion that he is at bottom one with nature—the great Mother. Literature expresses this deep though hazy intuition of man and, so, brings it to the upper and clearer regions of consciousness. The literary genius, through his insight, sees the truths that lie in the twilight planes of the human mind and exposes them vividly before others; this is the function of expression in art. The Upanisadic mantra *Tat-tvam asi* (That Thou art) is an explication of the implicit truth about the oneness of the human self with the spirit of nature. The two are not strangers. "It is the business of our spirit to fraternise with the world", and "the union of the human heart with the universe beyond soothes the sorrows of man and out of this union arises literature." The Sanskrit word *sāhitya* for literature also points to the same truth: it means 'that which unites'.

But what is then Beauty which has also been recognised by Tagore as an end of literature? Beauty, for Tagore, is born of the fraternising activity of the human soul. "Beauty is but a bridge between the self and matter." Anything appropriated through love becomes beautiful, our soul is ever busy in establishing intimate relationship with its surroundings, making the stranger friendly, the ugly beautiful.

And how does this bridging of the gulf between man and nature become possible? How is beauty created? Through imagination. "The power through which the union with the universe becomes not merely one of the senses, but one of the mind and soul, is the power of imagination." Thus imagination, like digestive juices, helps us to assimilate nature into our mind and soul. Imagination transforms nature into the world of man. This concept of imagination is very much like that of Coleridge who views this faculty

as a "living power" that "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate, it struggles to idealise and unify." Through literature, therefore, man ( following the great authors ) assimilates the outer world into his inner one and feels at one with great nature.

We proceed now to the second value for which literature stands. This is knowledge of man, that is, of human nature. Literature is the expression of human thoughts and emotions ; in describing external nature it but humanises it. So literature can teach us more of man than the moral philosophies or social sciences can. For Tagore literature expresses the truth of mankind ; and this truth resides not in man's present and actual degradation but in his future and ideal perfection. Literature, if it is worth its name, must express this ideal towards which man is ever trying to proceed transcending his actual limitations. "The super-man, the ideal towards which man is progressing, is being evolved by his literature, and such permanent ideal is being accumulated therein as a guide for each succeeding generation." Thus Tagore views literature as an instrument of human evolution and a vehicle of cultural education for man. Tagore himself was an artist with a 'high purpose' and he was not like the fallen poets whom Keats accuses of :

Forgetting the great end  
Of Poesy, that it should be a friend  
To soothe the cares, and lift the thought of man.

The faculty instrumental in giving the artist knowledge of this essential and ideal man is imagination, the same that ( we saw ) gives him the knowledge that nature is not alien to man. Literary imagination, therefore, is not an idle faculty like fancy, it is, as Wordsworth puts it, "another name for absolute power and clear insight." The artist through this power divines the deep-seated principles operating in human nature, the teliological ends that are drawing mankind ahead.

We now come to the third value of literature : this is self-realisation. In specifying this end Tagore has pushed his concept of literature too near that given by the traditional theory of art ( i. e. the scholastic and the Indian theories ). He has made literature a discipline, a *sādhana*, and has sharply distinguished beauty from charm, aesthetic joy from pleasure. He has developed an idea of literature as an aid to self-culture, a veritable means to spiritual

education. Man has a desire to know himself, his real self. And this real self, he finds, is not the limited individual ego but some universal spirit. This mystic sense is deeply rooted in his nature and finds expression in his best literature. That is to say, the literary genius, being the most conscious point of society, a seer, can most clearly realise the truth that the individual is but a self-created limitation, an error or an illusion (*māyā*), the universal spirit is the only real Being that breathes through us all. Tagore has introduced this metaphysical truth in his aesthetic thought. The realisation of the true nature of our self unites man with man and makes him a wider and a more comprehensive personality. "Man, in his literature, is persistently striving to enlarge and enrich the content of his consciousness in order to raise his soul to higher and higher levels, to become more and more of his true self."

The faculty required for this self-realisation ( and, so, for literature which expresses the experience of this realisation ) is not exactly the imagination spoken of earlier in this essay. This faculty is something finer and rarer than imagination. Tagore conceives it as a *yogic* power. His concept of this rare power resembles that of inspiration as given by Plato and Shelley. The working of this power is regarded as spontaneous beyond the control of will. Intellect can be controlled, "whereas genius, breaking the laws of mind, comes like a wind, it neither listens to one's invitation nor does it pay any heed to one's forbidding." Shelley calls this spirit of genius "some invisible influence" which "like an inconstant wind awakens ( the mind ) to transitory lightness". Plato speaks of poets as "possessed by a spirit not their own". The *yogic* power, for Tagore, is but the intuitive faculty possessed by the mystics while imagination is the faculty possessed by such 'human' artists as Shakespeare, Wordsworth or Browning. Through imagination one reads into nature ( both human and material ) certain indwelling truths while through mystic power one is aware of one's own self as continuous with some universal self and gets his visions direct from this source.

It is interesting to note that Tagore, in speaking of this *yogic* power or semi-conscious work of inspiration, follows the traditional theory of artistic creation. *Sukranitisara* says that the imager should have a contemplative vision *yoga-dhyana* and should not directly

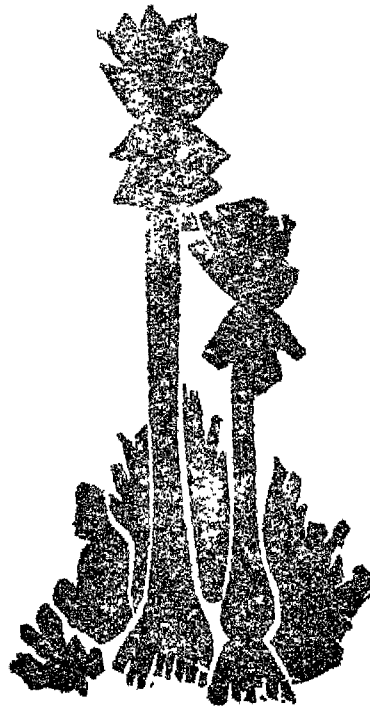
observe any form or figure. Scholastic aesthetics also speaks of a contemplative primary act to be followed by a secondary act of setting down what has been visualized in contemplation. The *Sukranītisāra* too says: "When the model has been conceived, set down on the wall what was visualised". Tagore's idea of creative process in such mystic types of art as that of Blake, for instance, is that it is essentially "sub-conscious and magical", a work of some supernatural voice, *daiya-vāni*.

Thus there is an ascetic flavour in Tagore's conception of literature and literary genius. He, like Tolstoy, opposes a hedonistic aesthetics and makes a sharp distinction between beauty and charm and between aesthetic delight and ordinary pleasure. "Ultimately Beauty makes for discipline, and discipline, in its turn, makes us more deeply conscious of Beauty".

Plato allowed in his *Republic* only that kind of literature which are written in praise of gods and heroes. Tagore, we have seen, accepts as worthy pieces of literature those that give us a sense of oneness with nature, inspire us with the ideals of human perfection which work like nisus in human progress, and make us aware of our self as one with the Universal Self. Literature for him presents a thesis in a very wide sense, it is not a matter of aesthesis or mere sensations and feelings. Instead of exciting our sensuous and emotional nature literature helps us to educate it. That which rouses our affective side makes for passivity; true literature, by stimulating our contemplative side, makes for activity. Herein lies the value of literature for life and herein its educational significance. The cathartic effect of true literature consists in releasing us from the passions by defeating them. Artistic delight is an ecstasy, a standing aside of the active, spiritual soul from the passive, aesthetic and natural self.

"The function of a thing is its nature considered dynamically". The function of literature, according to Tagore, is to teach us to unite with nature, to love and have faith in man and to realise our greater self. In a word, the function of literature is to educate man (of course, without being didactic). Speaking of this characteristic function of literature, Shelley wrote, "The most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry... The poets

are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." Tagore's theory of literature is a more thorough and convincing defence of this principal art-form based as it is on the view that literature educates man how to live and develop in perfect harmony with nature, how to transcend the stage of passivity and limitations to reach a higher and freer condition of active living.



## JORASANKO WAY

ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

NO ONE HAS CRAZES NOW. They have this thing called education instead, even in stories for children. In our days old and young had crazes. This house itself has been through many crazes, some I have witnessed, of others I have heard. Those who told us stories brought the old days back to life again. No one tells such stories now-a-days.

Long ago there came the craze for nationalism. I cannot remember how it started, but all at once old and young, men and women, everyone went crazy.

In those days we did not fight about politics like now. It was more like a wave flowing over the country, making the land fertile but breaking up nothing.

We all started to get anxious about our country. Rabikaka<sup>1</sup> was our leader. We felt we must do something for the country. We went and opened a shoe-shop. Our ancient major-domo grew worried, couldn't we come over nationalistic without opening the shoe-shop? But no. We hung up a huge sign-board "Swadeshi Bhandar" (National Stores). We had made up our minds that we would sell only country goods.

Bolu<sup>2</sup> worked hard, wandering about everywhere, collecting things, from lac for ladies' feet to leather shoes. That was his particular craze.

We carried on a roaring trade in that shop. We did not stop at the shop, we opened village committees. Then came the plague, we formed relief centres and good Sister Nivedita<sup>3</sup> came and worked with us. Everywhere was a wave of self-sacrifice. We would go to Pasupati babu's<sup>4</sup> house for we must raise subscriptions for a National Fund. On the roof of our hackney carriage we had a huge tin trunk on which was written in large white letters "Matri-Bhandar."

\* An excerpt from Abanindranath Tagore's memoirs entitled *Gharoa*—a Visva-Bharati publication—written jointly by Abanindranath and Renee Chanda. Adapted from the original Bengali by Lila Majumdar.

1 Rabinâranath Tagore.

2 Talented nephew of Rabinâranath Tagore. Died at the early age of 29.

3 Swami Vivekananda's American disciple Miss Margaret Noble.

4 Pasupati Bose—well-known figure of the Swadeshi days.

We raised between fifty and sixty thousand in a single day. Many Europeans came to see the fun and wave their hats, and shout 'Bande Mataram.' Heaven knows if they were the police or newspaper reporters or what not.

The railway coolies from Ramkistopur<sup>5</sup> let us know that they would help if we went personally. Rabikaka and the rest of us went. The monsoon had commenced and we made our head-quarters in a tin shed where the contributions were counted in.

The shed was too small for a meeting so we sat on carpets under the stationary railway trucks and gave lectures and listened to them. I could not help wondering what would happen if an engine started to pull the trucks along.

Just then a coolie ran up to say that an engine was indeed arriving. We scrambled out at once, but we had raised three hundred from the coolies alone.

That was also the year of the great earthquake (1897?). We had all gone to the Provincial Conference at Natore. The Maharaja<sup>6</sup> was the President of the Reception Committee. Rabikaka proposed that the proceedings should be in Bengali so that everybody could understand. We always supported him in every thing; naturally we agreed. But the leaders made trouble.

We all went to the marquee and shouted "Bengali ! Bengali !" whenever anyone tried to speak in English. Most of the leaders acknowledged defeat. Even Lalmohan Ghosh<sup>7</sup> who was an Englishman of Englishmen, who never spoke in Bengali, and of whom no-one could dream that he ever could, even he had to speak in Bengali. And such Bengali ! It was every bit as beautiful as his English. I shall never hear the like of it again.

I painted a picture of Mother India, a Japanese artist enlarged it and made a banner of it. Rabikaka wrote a new song and poor old Dinu<sup>8</sup> had to go round Chorebagan<sup>9</sup> singing the new song, with the banner on his shoulder, and collecting funds.

<sup>5</sup> Railway station near Howrah.

<sup>6</sup> Maharaja Jagadindranarayan Roy of Natore.

<sup>7</sup> Well-known barrister and orator.

<sup>8</sup> Dinendranath Tagore—Rabindranath Tagore's grand-nephew. Served at Santiniketan for many years as a teacher of Rabindranath's songs many of which he preserved and transcribed in notation form.

<sup>9</sup> Chorebagan Mohalla near Jorasanko house of the Tagores.



We even changed our personal get-up. There were anglicised leaders of society in those days. One of them gave a party and invited us. How should we dress? Rabikaka said, "Let us go in dhoti and chadar." So we all dressed up in dhoti and punjabi and wore long-nosed Punjabi sandals, and wondered about our bare legs. Then we noticed that Rabikaka had stockings on, so we put them on too. Now we felt more at ease, because in those days no nice people went out without stockings.

So we set off, my eldest brother,<sup>10</sup> Samarda,<sup>11</sup> Rabikaka and myself, all secretly nervous about the kind of reception awaiting us.

We had barely started when Rabikaka suddenly pulled off his stockings and threw them away. He said: "Why keep them? Let us be really nationalistic." Naturally we followed suit.

The party was at its height when we arrived. Everyone looked grave. Many of them were old family friends but they all turned serious and looked stiffly away.

Rabikaka made no remark, but we nudged one another, these people are really offended! As there was no more to be said we kept ourselves in the background. There was a dramatic performance afterwards, and Dinu was Buddhadeva, so we were obliged to remain till the end.

Later on we heard that they were indeed furious, for what manner of behaviour was this, showing ourselves in that sort of get-up. It was bad enough turing up in Indian clothes but to appear with bare legs really went too far! Specially before ladies! Afterwards everyone copied us.

That year Congress held its session in Calcutta and distinguished guests arrived from everywhere. We decided to invite them to a party to which everybody was to come in national dress. Rabikaka insisted on printing on the formal invitation cards: "All must come in national dress."

Believe me it made quite a sensation.

One day Rabikaka said we must celebrate the Rakhi ceremony,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Gaganendranath Tagore.

<sup>11</sup> Samarendranath Tagore.

<sup>12</sup> Rakhi (from *Raksha*) Bandhan is an ancient Hindu festival of tying coloured thread round the wrist as a symbol of protection (*raksha*). Rabindranath gave this festival its new meaning and significance. Asvin 20th (mid-October) the day on which the incident described above took place is still observed in many parts of Bengal as a day of love and fraternisation.

the festival of the thread. We got someone to write out the full ceremonial procedure. We decided to have an early bathe in the Ganges and tie the thread round everybody's wrist.

Then Rabikaka said we must walk to the river, we naturally protested but had to give in. So we ordered the servants to come with the towels etc., they brought their own things too, and we bathed, master and man.

We made a regular procession of it, and crowds gathered on the way, and the ladies scattered rice over us and blew on conch-shells. Dinu sang on the way Rabikaka's song about the earth and water,<sup>13</sup> the winds and fruits of Bengal.

There was a crowd by the riverside all eager to see Rabikaka, and we tied the thread round all their wrists, without any exception. We even got hold of passers-by.

On our way back we saw the ostlers at work in Biru Mallik's stables. Rabikaka plunged in and tied the thread round their wrists. We were nervous because they were Muslims. We thought there would be a fearful row. But nothing happened.

When Rabikaka proposed a visit to the mosque on Chitpore Road<sup>14</sup> I quietly went home. Dinu, Suren,<sup>15</sup> and some others followed him.

When Dinu's father<sup>16</sup> heard of this, there was such a to do ! But they all returned safely. The moulvis in the mosque had merely smiled when they had tied the thread !

So our work went on and we were filled with high hopes about an industrial revolution when our nationalistic days came to a sudden end.

But I had learnt one great lesson, to give to my country something of myself.

<sup>13</sup> See Rabindranath Tagore's *Poems* ( Visva-Bharati publication ) poem No. 43, p. 59.

<sup>14</sup> Nakhoda Masjid which became the scene of the warmest inter-communal amity on August 15th, 1947.

<sup>15</sup> Surendranath Tagore

<sup>16</sup> Dwipendranath Tagore.

## AN ENGLISH GURUDEVA—DR. L. P. JACKS

S. K. GEORGE

INDIAN TRADITION, IN RELIGION as well as in Education, emphasizes the need of a guru in the growth of the seeking soul. It further holds that the earnest soul does find the guru he needs, the supply surprisingly meeting the demand in this field. A chance acquaintance with the writings of Dr. L. P. Jacks came to me, as a student, with the thrill of the discovery of a guru ; and ever since then his writings have been to me a source of inspiration and a guide to thought. It was highly gratifying to me therefore to find this my debt to Dr. Jacks perceived by Dinabandhu Andrews in a kind review that he wrote—one of the last pieces of writing he must have done—of my little book, *Gandhi's Challenge to Christianity*. "He shows in it", wrote Andrews in the *Modern Review* of March 1940, "his deep devotion to Mahatma Gandhi on the one side, while it is not difficult to read between the lines a devotion almost equally great in his intellectual life to Dr. L. P. Jacks, the Editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, on the other." These two masters have done more to mould my life and thought than any others. Again and again have I found many ideas expressed in words of classic beauty by Dr. Jacks illustrated in heroic action by Mahatma Gandhi. The way of *Satyagraha*, e. g., as practised by Gandhiji, has not, to my mind, been better described than in the following words of Dr. Jacks, which express his understanding of Christianity as a pacific yet a militant faith : "It follows a Prince of Peace, but it follows him with a sword in its hand, practising sweet reasonableness to its utmost limits, but ready also for the moment, which is sure to come, when persuasiveness takes the form of disciplined courage and the church becomes an army marching as to war, every saint a potential warrior girded with all the armour of God." Again, has not this English Guru caught the very spirit of the Indian Mahatma's life-long service of self-giving when he answers the great question : *What shall we do with our lives ?* "Give them away. Make a generous gift of them to mankind. Find the thing that is worth dying for, as well as worth living for. Die for it daily, not in a spectacular way, but in a silent way. Spread your dying over the weeks, the months, the years.

Let your life be consumed in service. Consume yourself valiantly, cheerfully, creatively, skilfully. Put all your intelligence into it ; put all your skill into it ; put all your courage into it. Waste no thought on asking whether you are as happy as you have a right to be. Ask for no guarantees."

The words that I have quoted are from a book of Dr. Jacks called *Elemental Religion*. He has for long been recognized as one of the few major prophets in England at the present time ; but like all true prophets he has been spoken against and excluded from the accredited pulpits of the established church in the land. No wonder, for to him religion has ceased to be a church and chapel affair, to be administered within those closed precincts in strong Sunday doses, but a natural response of man in his wholeness to the totality of his experiences. "I see God", he says, "as all men see the light, not as shining in vacuo, but as a universal illumination reflected by every object on which it shines. Religion in the modern world has to maintain itself amid cross currents from many quarters, science, philosophy, literature, art, the changing conditions of social life and many others. No longer a flame burning in a closed room where the air is still, it now burns in the open, blown upon by all the winds of heaven, which may either fan it to a brighter blaze or extinguish it altogether." It was a heroic attempt that he therefore made, as Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, to open wide the windows of that theological college. The invitations to Gurudeva Tagore and Prof. Radhakrishnan to lecture in Oxford were such experiments in letting in fresh air and Dr. Jacks himself felt the ventilation greatly improved. But he found that he had overshot his mark and that even such a liberal foundation as M. C. O., dedicated to "Truth, Liberty and Religion", would not launch out on the uncharted seas of non-denominationalism.

Jacks, like Gurudeva, could never be a denominationalist. And this not in the sphere of religion only. He is an apostle of the *whole man* and anything that violates the wholeness of man, whether in the realm of religion, education or politics, is anathema to him and calls forth his most spirited condemnation. This idea of the whole man with all its implications came to him rather late in life, with the strength of a new revelation, and carried him far afield, even to tour America as an advocate of physical education under the auspices of

the National Recreation Association of America. He tells the amusing anecdote that a friend of his, an Oxford Don, hearing that he had placed himself at the service of a "Recreation" society and misunderstanding the implications, wrote admonishing him that a man at his time of life had better prepare for the Day of Judgment. To that Dr. Jacks was moved to reply that as far as he knew the best way of preparing for the Day of Judgment was to mind one's own business— "a fundamental article in my creed". He himself found it very much his business to plead for *The Education of the Whole Man*.<sup>1</sup> He has had experience, both as student and as teacher, of systems of education and educators "who treat the brain of the pupil as the only point of his anatomy the schoolmaster has to do with and having little use for the hand except as a writing instrument. For such the branches of the Tree of Knowledge were not branches growing on the tree and sharing a common life, but branches sawn off, tied up in a bundle of faggots called the curriculum and therefore dying or dead." But to him no education is worth the name that does not result in some kind of recognisable skill, even if it be only in correct carriage of the body in walking or intelligible articulation in speaking one's own language. In his book on the theme he devotes a chapter to co-education of mind and body. Not that he regards these as separate entities in the human make-up. In fact the soul or the mind of man, according to his philosophy, includes the body, the two forming an indivisible whole.

This idea of the whole man has carried him to wider fields than education and religion ; has led him to attempt what he calls an industrial version of morality. This he has developed in a course of lectures he delivered under the Stevenson Foundation at Glasgow University and published later as *The Art of Living Together*, perhaps his most substantial contribution to the study of modern civilization. An industrial civilization like that of the modern world, he says, can only save itself by the quality of its work. Bread-winning and soul-saving are not two independent operations, but a single, continuous process. Much is heard these days of the hatefulness of labour and the need to limit the boredom of it to as few hours as possible. But this is to misconceive the human significance of labour. Man is

1 This is the title of one of Dr. Jacks's books.

essentially a worker and it is through skilled performance of his work that he not only earns his living but finds his happiness as well. "So too social service is very imperfectly understood when we think of it as though it were an occupation of our leisure time or consisted in the use we make of our surplus money. The root of social service lies, not in what we do when we are off duty, but in what we do when we are on duty, not in the use we make with the surplus when it has been earned, but in the motives of the work by which we have earned whatever we possess, surplus and all. Is that work good? Is the great question. The ethic of the future will have to be based on duty done in the common work of the world. That will be the rock foundation on which art, morality and religion will rear their superstructures." And he offers three key ideas for a morality that will be germane, and not extraneous, to the industrial world of today. These are *skill*, *trusteeship* and *scientific method*. The right to skill, he holds, is the greatest of human rights and the latent capacity for it the biggest of the undeveloped assets of man. He quotes with approval a visiting Indian Professor's remark that the outstanding fact in the social condition of the West is the devitalization of labour through the loss of personal skill. The Labour Party, with its political obsessions and economic preoccupations, has failed to safeguard the real rights of labour in not insisting on a minimum degree of skill sufficient to furnish the worker with a responsible interest in his work. The second element in industrial morality is the spirit of trusteeship, the spirit which accepts public responsibility as a trust never to be betrayed. In the industrial world, as well as in military service, it ought to be the unquestioned code that he who scamps his work or sleeps on his watch is as much a traitor as he who goes over to the enemy. "The type of citizen our civilization is calling for, and without which it cannot be maintained, is the type which accepts a vocation, whatever that may chance to be, as a trust committed to it and which can be trusted, and freely trusted, to carry out the work it undertakes with the utmost skill and fidelity the case admits of." In the incorruptibility of the legal bench and the dependability of mutual insurance he finds examples and guarantees of man's capacity to develop the fiduciary elements in his make-up to a degree sufficient to meet the strains and stresses of the modern, complex social organism. That brings him to the third desideratum of an industrial

civilization, viz. scientific organisation. "This implies the creation and continuous improvement of certain scientific methods for harmonizing conflicting claims and for turning human relations which would otherwise be mutually destructive into relations of mutual helpfulness." Dr. Jacks is most telling in the apt illustrations he brings in to enforce his points. He cites, as an example of the industrial version of morality he has been pleading for, a remarkably beautiful astronomical instrument he found in a museum, the work of an Indian Muslim artificer over a thousand years ago. Round the edge of the fine brass work there ran an inscription in delicate Arabic characters: "This astrolabe is the work of Hussein Ali, mechanic and mathematician and servant of the Most High God. May His name be exalted throughout the universe!" "Mechanic and mathematician", comments Dr. Jacks, "betoken the skill and competence of the citizen, servant of the Most High God the excellence he aspires to."

Underlying all his thinking on these high matters is his conception of the universe itself as a living one,<sup>2</sup> not dead or indifferent to man's concerns or his treatment of it. This universe is no chance concourse of atoms, but seems to be a deliberately designed place, fit for heroes to live in. "The most significant character of matter is its responsiveness to good treatment. It is the generous friend of the good workman and the implacable enemy of the bad". For the universe unquestionably has a harsh aspect, so harsh and seemingly so inimical to human happiness that a great Oxford thinker, Dr. B. H. Streeter, was led to declare that pain, and not pleasure, is the fundamental fact of life. Dr. Jacks would put it differently, finding in the universe a challenge to heroic living. The tension between pain and pleasure, the consciousness of being pulled in opposite directions, the struggle between the hero and the coward within the heart of everyone, is, to him, the basic principle of life. And this is no evil, but a fundamental fact to be accepted with courage. "All the great ideals of humanity are pang-born, are the answers that the heroic spirit of man has given to the challenge of suffering, to the challenge of frustration, to the challenge of bereavement, to the challenge of death, to the challenge of pain in one or other of its innumerable forms". "All religious testimony",

2 *A Living Universe* is the title of one series of his Hibbert Lectures.

to him, particularly the great testimony of Jesus enduring the agony of the cross in utter faithfulness to his Great Companion, "converges towards a single point, namely this : There is that in the world, call it what you will, which responds to the confidence of those who trust it, declaring itself to them as a fellow-worker in the pursuit of the Eternal Values, meeting their loyalty to it with reciprocal loyalty to them, and coming in at critical moments when the need of its sympathy is greatest. This is the Helper of men, sharing their business as Creators of Value, nearest at hand when the worst has to be encountered ; the companion of the brave, the upholder of the loyal, the friend of the lover, the healer of the broken, the joy of the victorious, the God who is spirit, the God who is love".<sup>3</sup> And he has a beautiful name for God in this aspect, *Our Beautiful Enemy*, always demanding the best from us, never making the path of life easy for us ; for man is created to be a hero and not a coward.

In his own life, which has now long passed the Psalmist's span of three score years and ten,—for he is far beyond eighty<sup>4</sup> and "a trespasser on the universe"—he has felt the shaping hand of this Beautiful Enemy. His soul, which in his philosophy includes his body, has thriven on a mixed diet of pain and pleasure. "The amount of pain that the soul can assimilate with benefit to itself is greater than the amount of pleasure." Born into an obscure family, he lost his father when he was only 14. That ruined his prospects of regular university education and placed the burden of bringing up a family of gifted children upon the shoulders of a puny but resolute mother. He has put into a remarkable parable the debt that he owes to his mother, the debt that all great men have owed and acknowledged to the hands that rocked their cradles. "One day, not long ago, I was walking abroad with my dog, a powerful Alsatian, when a tiny weasel, a mere wisp of life, suddenly ran out in front of us. It stopped and reared up in a posture of battle, as though to bar the way to the approaching monsters. The dog dashed forward to the attack. But the brave little creature stood its ground, faced the foe and put on such a fiery aspect that the great dog was terrified, turned tail and ran away.—It was a vision of my mother's battle with the

<sup>3</sup> From *Religious Perplexities*, the first and most stimulating of his Hibbert Lectures.

<sup>4</sup> His delightful autobiography is entitled *The Confession of an Octogenarian* : Allen & Unwin : 15s.



world, the battle she had fought for me, of one origin and purpose through the realms of animated nature, from lowest to highest, the fight of the mother for the children, that Life may not perish from the earth. Is there any combat so sublime? I deem it a manifestation of the Living God."

There was another mother in his life, one who took in academic orphans like himself, who had been denied the privileges of careers within the great residential universities of England, London University, Mother of Orphans. Working far into the night for years, most of the time in a bed-sitting room at 12s. a week, with only a stinking gas jet to read by, he qualified himself successively for her B. A. and M. A. degrees. This opened the way to him for an academic career, first as student in an Oxford theological college, then as preacher in Unitarian churches in Liverpool and Birmingham, later as Principal of his theological college and for over forty years, ever since its inception, as Editor of the *Hibbert Journal*. This last was the greatest opportunity that came to him for his self-chosen task of Completing the Reformation, which was to him another name for liberating religion from its denominational bounds and building it on the broadest foundations whence its light might shine upon all the concerns and activities of man. "To the work of editing the *Journal* I owe an education in Catholicity. It has helped to make me what I would still become more completely, a worker for the *Whole*. Imperfect as my response has been there is nothing in my experience for which I more devoutly thank God."<sup>5</sup>

This work he has now laid down, at the age of 87, winning the acclamation of the enlightened all over the world. Book-writing, which he took to rather late in life, has also made him known to, and placed under his debt, a multitude of readers wherever the English language is spoken. There are about thirty of his books, enshrining the ripest wisdom, often in the form of parables, like *Mad Shepherds* and *The Legends of Smokeover*, all of them a challenge and a stimulus to thought and action. He continues to be a seeker after Truth, a spiritual undergraduate still, as he aptly describes himself, in the university of Truth, unafraid of Truth in any of its manifestations and bidding men listen and respond to it in all its moods.

"First the interrogative, then the indicative, then the imperative. The growth of truth, the evolution of truth, invariably follows that threefold sequence—first the question, then the answer, then the command. When men are asking questions, as they are doing now, about everything in the heavens and on earth, truth, we may say, is in its infancy, full of wonder like a young child, full of curiosity and hesitation. Often the questions die at the stage of their infancy; the rate of infant mortality among the questions we ask is very high, and rightly so, for many of them are unreasonable. Only the reasonable ones survive and receive their answers in course of time. But when the answer comes it is never something added to the question from outside; always it is something that grows out of the question from within. The answer itself is simply the question itself more fully grown. And the growth of truth is not ended with the answer. Out of the answer there presently emerges the command *go thou and do likewise*. And then it is that the Holy Catholic Church<sup>6</sup> appears on the scene embracing the truth in the fulness of its growth—from the question, through the answer, right on to the command, responding to it all by offering itself to the service of the Highest. "Here am I, Lord", it cries; "send me—the ambassador and the servant of Thy everlasting truth—Thy questions, Thy answers, and Thy commands."<sup>7</sup>

6 The Holy Catholic Church: Not by any means confined to the Christian Church. He gives many names to this all-embracing fraternity of the Seekers after Truth, the Creators of Value, the Beloved Community of the Faithful, or the Society of Friends.

7. *Elemental Religion*.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS. BOOK NOTES

*A Pilgrim's Progress.* By C. F. ANDREWS. Agra : Shiva Lal Agarwala & Co., Ltd. Re. 1-0-0

This book is rightly called *A Pilgrim's Progress*, for it records a pilgrimage in ideas and deeds of a deeply sensitive soul in modern times. C. F. Andrews was born and brought up in a narrow Christian creed but he worked his way out to a view of life which embraced the whole of humanity, which made him feel

"every man a friend

And all I meet my kin."

It led him to stand against every barrier, creedal or racial or national and to espouse the cause of the afflicted and the down-trodden all over the world. The influences that wrought this liberation for him are faithfully and gratefully recorded. Among these the most powerful were Gurudeva Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Albert Schweitzer. But all these great servants of humanity only helped to deepen and broaden his devotion to and understanding of his own Master and unfailing Companion, the Living Christ. That devotion was the secret of Andrews' life of unremitting service. This is a pilgrimage from which all can draw courage and inspiration in their own life's journey.

The book seems to have been specially written as a short autobiographical sketch, but it contains no introduction or editorial note explaining the time and circumstances of its composition. This is a grave omission.

*My Search for Truth.* By S. RADHAKRISHNAN. Agra : Shiva Lal Agarwala & Co., Ltd. Re. 1-0-0.

In another slender volume of the series Sir S. Radhakrishnan tells the story of his search for truth. It is the story, modestly told, of a remarkable achievement in the building up of a great personality. It is significant that the Professor attributes whatever success he has had in life to "an invisible hand guiding me for purposes other than my own." Sir Radhakrishnan is one of the stoutest advocates among modern thinkers of the Idealist view of life, of the reality, of the Absolute. The book is valuable as giving a conspectus of the author's thoughts as they gradually developed in his mind and were presented to the world as opportunities arose. But what struck the present reviewer most is the revelation the last pages give of the author as a great friend of men, a physician of souls, finding time in the midst of his varied responsibilities to minister to the needs of a vast range of correspondents who have turned to him for counsel and comfort in life's perplexities and to whom he has been a friend, philosopher and guide. It is more in these endeavours to lighten the load of humanity in some measure that he finds genuine fulfilment of life's destiny than in his brilliant achievements.

S. K. George.

*India's Cultural Empire and Her Future : Revised Second Edition.* By SISIR KUMAR MITRA, Madras, 369 Esplanado, Sri Aurobindo Library, 118 pp. Rs. 2-4-0.

The book contains three essays entitled : India's Cultural Empire, Early Contacts of India with Islam and the Future of India.

The last essay which is inspired by the writings of Sri Aurobindo is the best. It contains much reflection and is thought-provoking. The author takes an optimistic view of the future of India. He is not one who believes that India has fulfilled her mission through her great achievements in the past and that she has nothing more to contribute. The author's interpretation of history leads him to the conviction that if India was great in the past she is bound to be greater in the future. There is a motive force behind the process of evolution which is bound to lead her to newer and greater creations in the spiritual field.

The second essay on the Early contacts of India with Islam is good so far as it tries to prove the Indian power of receptivity and assimilation. In fact this power has been at the back of the great synthesis which we call Hindu Civilisation.

The author's first essay consists of three sections of unequal value. His attempt to prove Indian influence on Greek thought takes away much of the value of his book which is otherwise sober. Similarity in ideas is no proof of borrowing. Certain broad similarities between Greek and Indian thoughts might as well be attributed to the common Indo-European origin of the two civilisations. There is no doubt that neo-Platonism and Christianity imbibed certain Indian influences but that does not prove that Socrates and Plato were indebted to India. What he says about the relations between Asura and Assyria and Patala and America is equally uncritical. The names of gods in the Boghaz Kui inscription cannot be taken definitely as Vedic. They indicate a stage of transition from pre-Vedic to Vedic.

Coming to modern times, he has mixed up names of scholars and *farceurs* without discrimination. Anybody who speaks well of India is not a friend. Time has come when we should beware of people that placate us with a motive. Critics are often the best friends. Self-complacency arising out of a false sense of inferiority complex is one of our great weaknesses. Apart from these drawbacks there is a tone of sincerity and optimism throughout the book and that is its greatest asset.

*India.* By SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama. 122 pp. Rs. 1-12-0.

This brochure contains some of the essays and speeches of Swami Vivekananda on various Indian problems such as Education, Society, Religion etc. We

are familiar with the great ideas of Swami Vivekananda and we also know how they inspired the young generation half a century ago. They contributed not a little to the renaissance of India. His inspiring words have not yet lost their strength and this little book in a new set up will have its value.

*India of My Dreams.* By M. K. GANDHI. Compiled by R. K. Prabhu with a foreword by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Bombay : Hind Kitabs Ltd. 129 pp, Rs. 2-0-0.

In this collection R. K. Prabhu has skilfully selected the most telling and significant passages from Mahatma Gandhi's writings. The publication has been out at the most critical period of our national life. Freedom has been won but the old dreams have been frustrated. A new theory that neither ethnic affiliations, nor language nor culture but religion alone determines racial homogeneity, has received acceptance and divided a nation that is otherwise indivisible. The spirit of toleration that used to characterise our civilisation has been shipwrecked. This is just the time when we ought to listen once again to the voice of Gandhiji uttered in course of his life-long work in the service of the nation. The book also contains his writings on other important problems like Naya Talim, National Language and Script, Labour, Minorities etc. Mahatmaji is often misquoted and misinterpreted on these issues by people not quite conversant with his views. The present compilation will render an invaluable service by presenting those views in a handy and authoritative volume.

*Our Inheritance and its Significance.* By S. B. SHARMA. Bombay : Hind Kitabs Ltd. 207 pp. Rs. 6-8-0.

This is a collection of eleven essays on various aspects of Indian culture which were originally lectures that the author delivered to the British troops in India. The essays are well designed, clearly presented and based on authoritative sources. They cover a wide field—æsthetics, philosophy, art and architecture, spread of Indian civilisation to the Far East, modern trends, growth of nationalism and contributions of our great spiritual leaders such as Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi to the renaissance of modern India. The author's style is not unnecessarily heavy. Instead of encumbering the essays with footnotes he gives a short bibliography at the end of each chapter so as to enable the reader to take up more detailed study of each topic. On the whole it can be recommended as a really good book to the general reader. The printing and get up are exceptionally good specially in these days when there is so much dearth of materials.

*The Story of Ancient India.* By Dr. B. G. GOKHALE M. A. Ph. D. Baroda : Padmaja Publications. 216 pp. Rs. 3-8-0.

The object of this book as the author himself says is to present the outlines of political and cultural history of ancient India. "It is meant for such readers who desire to have an intimate and comprehensive knowledge of men and events in the ancient days of India." The purpose however has been baffled. The author has not been able to get rid of the handicaps of a specialist. As he has followed a strictly chronological scheme he has been forced to traverse the whole field of ancient history—political, social, religious, literary etc. in the compass of this small book. The treatment has been necessarily very schematic and the presentation heavy. Although he has avoided footnotes he has not escaped from the temptation of quoting authorities by name in support of his theories. The author however is fully conversant with his subject and is acquainted with the original literature. The book is an excellent guide for students of history.

*Social Contacts of French Women in Calcutta.* By INDIRA SARKAR M. A. (French). Calcutta : Chukervertty Chatterji & Co Ltd. 65 pp. Rs. 3-0-0.

The greater portion of this little book is devoted to a pen-picture of a conducted tour in Calcutta by Miss Sarkar with some French ladies under the auspices of the Alliance Francaise. As a student of French literature the authoress shows keen interest in true French life. But the reactions of French visitors specially in social circles, studios, art galleries etc. in Calcutta are most interesting. Miss Sarkar has also included in the book a few essays on French literature specially on *Cid* of Corneille, *Cyrano de Bergerac* of Rostand, and on de Vigny and Verlaine. She exhibits a great enthusiasm and honest appreciation of all that is France and French. But why a long bibliography at the end of the book that has no bearing on subjects treated ?

P. C. B.

*Economics of the Cabinet Delegation's Proposals* By Dr. S. K. MURANJAN, Published by the Bombay Discussion Group, 30/32 Church Gate Street, Bombay. 24 pp.

The brochure contains the abstract of a talk given by the author under the auspices of the Bombay Discussion Group. The abstract of a talk generally tends to be 'high and dry', and the booklet, unfortunately, is not free from that defect. Considering the over-all importance of the topic, a detailed and comprehensive treatment of the subject would have been more useful and welcome.

The booklet will, however, serve as an excellent basis for further work on the line. Most readers will agree with the general conclusions which the author

has drawn from the relevant figures. We commend the booklet for a careful perusal.

*Olive to Keynes* By J. C. KUMARAPPA. Published by Navajiban Publishing House, Amedabad, 42 pp. Rs. 0-12-0.

In this small book, Mr. Kumarappa gives an account of India's public debt from the time of the East India Company to the present-day.

Within a narrow compass, a mass of historical facts and figures has been introduced, and very skilfully arranged by the author to show the reckless exploitation of India's poor resources by the British Government. "Probably between Plassey and Waterloo 100 million Pounds were transferred from Indian boards to English Banks." (pp 12). During the period 1815 to 1939, India's payment to England approximated the figure of Rs. 1,805 crores. And as if this was not enough, during the last seven years, India's contribution for war efforts mounted up to Rs. 3,700 crores. Sri Kumarappa concludes, and rightly so, that the "Empire was conceived in avarice and fattened on loot."

Sri Kumarappa is a prolific writer and has a very lucid way of presentation. Economists, and laymen alike, will find the book useful.

K. N. Bhattacharya

*Gandhi and Gandhism* ; By NAGENDRANATH GUPTA. Hind Kitabs Ltd.

This book is a valuable addition to the existing literature on Gandhi and Gandhism. The author gives in this posthumous publication an estimate of Gandhiji's contribution to Indian nationalism. He also analyses the main factors of Gandhian philosophy. Years ago, as a detached observer he discovered in Gandhi the right leader to lead the destiny of India's teeming millions. We see to-day how *true* he was and how detached were his views. The book is extremely readable because of the elegant style and literary finish which distinguished Nagendranath Gupta as one of the most eminent journalists of India.

Benoy G. Ray

*The Living Mask* ; By FURUSHOTTAM TRIKALDAS. Baroda : Padmaja Publications, 205 pp. Rs. 5-0-0.

The starting-point as well as the *motif* of the novel is an imaginary miracle of medical science. A brain specialist transplants the brain of one Indian politician, Punder, into the head of one British Inspector of Police, Leash. The result is that the mind of Punder lives in the body of Leash. This leads to all sorts of complications, legal and psycho-physical, and the matter becomes intriguing because Punder and Leash had each a wife and a few children. The complica-

tions are worked out with great clarity and the different issues dealt with in an interesting manner. The story develops at a quick pace and runs to an unhappy climax.

It is a delightful story, but judged as a piece of literature it lacks that genuine human touch and that sense of reality which make a piece of writing a work of art. The author has brought out the obvious complications following a transplantation of a mind in another body but has not fully exploited the poetic potentialities of such a situation ; he has shown much judgement, and some fancy too, but very little of true aesthetic imagination. Characterisation is meagre, the characters lacking in individuality. The plot is well constructed but its main prop, the transplantation, is weak in the sense that it is a myth that does not readily induce 'a willing suspension of disbelief'.

The author has a command over the medium and his style is clear and racy. There are some fine thoughts on society and world-politics which show the author to be a thoughtful man who has observed many sides of our modern life.

*Hinduism and Modern Science.* By M. A. KAMATH. Published by the Author. 260 pp. Rs. 4-8-0.

The Hindu way of life, as revealed by the scriptures and also by the practice of orthodox Hindus, is not to be abandoned on the ground that it is old and superstitious. Dr. Kamath, trained in modern sciences, has studied the Hindu scriptures minutely in the light of modern ideas about correct living and he finds that the prescriptions of the Hindu sages are surprisingly wise. We ignore them at our cost. The Hindu way of life squares with the modern sciences, particularly the medical and the psychological sciences. The author has also shown how this ancient way leads to ultimate (i.e. spiritual) victory over the ills of life. The book has an interest which is both academic and practical. The author, though he writes with conviction, is not dogmatic,

P. J. Chaudhury

*India and UNO :* By MOHAN KUMARAMANGALAM. Published by the Bombay People's Publishing House 1947: 40. pp.

The pamphlet, while telling 'the story of India's first entrance on the international arena', shows what wicked methods were adopted by the Anglo-American Imperialists for suppressing the fundamental rights of India in the UNO and how the Indian delegation under the leadership of Mrs. Vijaylaxmi Pandit, in co-operation with other progressive nationalities in the UNO fought against the Imperialists and their supporters and gave them a crushing defeat.

The author's reaction to the proceedings of the UNO has been summarised in his own words as follows :—"In fact in the world today there are two groups :



one is imperialist and the other democratic. India cannot remain neutral between the two ; but has to throw her whole weight on one side, the democratic side".

K. N. B. Acharya.

*Travel Talk* : By ARUNA ASAFALI. Aundh · Aundh Publishing Trust, 1947. viii 136 pp. Rs. 2-8-0.

Aruna Asafali is an outstanding personality, one of the few daughters of India who have marched with the vanguard in the fight for freedom of the mother-country. *Travel Talk* is a collection of her writings contributed from time to time to a periodical named *Jana ta*, Delhi. In these articles she pours out her feelings of patriotism and tries to give to her readers some idea of her cult. In the four-page Foreward the first Premier of Free India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, has something very significant to say and the reader should not miss reading it.

One may not see eye to eye with the author in many a matter ; but one can hardly resist admiring her daring spirit and strength of conviction. The book came out early in 1947 ; many of the chapters had appeared during the previous years of hard struggle. The reader's attention is arrested by the prevision displayed throughout. One cannot but admit that the author lived far ahead of the times, and that the vision of freedom was vivid in her mind's eye even before it materialised.

A few stray observations may be cited for the prospective reader : Living 'legally' is violation of higher laws" ; "Delhi—the burial ground of Anglo-Saxon imperialism" ; "If you can give us one Leader who will choose to work in rural Bengal and not treat Calcutta as Bengal, we shall show how strong we can be", and so on.

The book will be interesting to those who can take courage in both hands in fighting for a just cause, and uncomfortable to others who are afraid of the risks of a crusade.

G. T.

*Rice and other Stories* ; By K. AHMED ABBAS. With an introductory Letter by Mulk Raj Anand. Kutub, Bombay, April 1947, 167 pp. Rs. 3-8-0.

Here is half a score of variegated vignettes which depict the endless mystery of life. Here are the myriad emotions of joy and terror, of courage and despair, of pleasure and suffering. K. Ahmed Abbas needs no introduction to our readers. He has many preoccupations but he 'applies his talents to his multifarious activities with remarkable success'. This new collection of short stories adds but another feather to his literary cap.

The stories in this volume testify to his literary power, his acute observation and his knowledge of human psychology. To us who had gone through the

terrible nightmare of the Bengal Famine of 1943 *Rice* has a poignant meaning and pathetic association.

In *Sparrows* we have a glimpse of the human heart, that fountain of sweet tears, and watch with interest the strange metamorphosis of Rahim Khan, who for his selfishness, cruelty and malevolence, appears to be next of kin to Oscar Wilde's selfish giant. *Umbrella* is fruity with the perfumes of romance but when we come towards the close, the subtly-managed surprise grips us and we pity the duped hero, duped of his sweet dreams of love and also robbed of the four ten-rupee notes, his month's pay. *Saffron Blossoms* is, as Mulk Raj Anand says, "surely the most hauntingly poignant piece of lyricism that has come out of the Kashmir struggle". *The Mark of an Indian* is, however, a 'tame' story, perhaps the weakest in the collection. In *Twelve Hours* the psychological conflict has been well portrayed but somehow one wonders how far the old revolutionary's embryonic character and natural impulses were responsible for the welter of emotions in the heroine's mind.

The tasteful get-up of the book will attract book-lovers and the limpid clarity of the author's style will provide good reading for a couple of hours.

*Light Unto a Cell*; By JAGAT NARAIN LAL, M. A., LL. B., Hind Kitabs, 1947. 110 pp, Rs. 2-8-0.

"Prison life proved highly beneficial in many ways to most congressmen, particularly to those who had been in office. Away from the din and turmoil of the world, each found time quietly to search his heart and discover what had insidiously crept into its hidden corners"—observes the author somewhere in this book, which narrates with graceful clarity the catharsis of his heart. Inside the prison-house he heard the call of Renunciation and had his first communion with Godhead.

The narrative is animated and rapturous but the pattern of this esoteric life that the author has fashioned would perhaps have come to many a devout Indian's business and bosom were it written in the author's mother-tongue, Hindi.

Dilip K. Sen

*The Vision of India*. By SISIRKUMAR MITRA. Culture Publishers, 63 College Street, Calcutta 12. 221 pp. Rs. 3-0-0.

The author attempts "to study from the standpoint of evolutionary history the progress of man towards his divine destiny." The task by its very nature is difficult and the author has not failed to make some rather sweeping generalisations.

"Her earliest days, however, were the most glorious" observes the author. Panegyrics of this kind are frequent in this book. In the realm of spirit

experiences, if India's past had been glorious, the glory was none the less limited to a few. Sadhana or Tapasya was never tried on a large or mass scale and thus siddhi or liberated action was not a fact in collective life, that is, it affected only a sector of collective life. The teeming millions of India afford no nobler example of spiritual greatness than the people of other lands.

The author of course is aware of this, as he believes in a future that will be greater than our past. But evidently he fails to carry the implication in its proper spirit. The glory of a few sadhakas cannot make all the people of an age or country glorious. And till that can be done the contemporary democratic spirit cannot be entirely satisfied. The endeavours in the past towards spiritual realisation applied, perhaps necessarily, not to a total whole but to a partial few.

At the same time Sachchidananda's virtues cannot be the exclusive monopoly of any one country. India might have been a pioneer in the field of spiritual adventure; but people in other parts of the globe have not been alien to spiritual life and experience. Now, there is a feeling among the saner section of the people in the world (in which is included the mystic) to share the good things, both spiritual and mundane, with the entire humanity. It is not so much a question of modernising mysticism as of democratising its base.

Spiritual adventure is a sacred private undertaking, where success within a specified period cannot be guaranteed. There cannot be earmarked sadhakas of a particular region, who are the custodians of the mantra. If "the gods have need of men to whose awakened souls they send their call to combine with them against the sons of Darkness and Division," it is difficult to understand why Indians should be the only chosen people and why gods should send their deputies only to India to revive the sanatana dharma of fulfilled life.

"The life has to be transcended." This and other ideas of Sri Aurobindo have often been expressed inside this book and they indeed form its inspiration. It becomes painful in this context to point out that the author has tended to make Sachchidananda a prisoner within Indian frontiers.

If there is a history of spiritual evolution, it is in the life of the individual seeker, who is always seeking to harmonise or integrate his life at higher levels. With the progress of man, the task becomes more complex and difficult—and that explains its supreme significance—as the harmony is now to be achieved at greater heights, to solve intenser antinomies. And because of this, an attempt to divide history into different ages, such as an age of institution, an age of intuitive thought, an age of reason etc., appears unconvincing. Spiritual tapasya is a responsible and honest undertaking and is less a matter of glory than for exploration. Its exposition *a historice* is a task of utmost delicacy. Our endeavours, if I may venture an opinion, should be in the direction of making the Indians Godward instead of propagating the view that India is spiritually great. The need for such emphasis is now over. India's spiritual greatness, if it is real, will reveal itself without missionary zeal. Sri Aurobindo himself, to

judge from his life and also one of his letters on this subject, eschews all propaganda about spirituality.

The foregoing observations have not been offered to minimise the importance of the book. It is full of deep philosophical truths. The Godward journey of man is primeval, insistent and irresistible. The author genuinely believes in the divine destiny of man, and so he speaks with faith and optimism. Secondly, in the present political context, the author's well-coordinated and closely reasoned thesis on the fundamental unity of India seems reassuring. It makes one feel that this uneasy and unnatural division of India can never be an enduring reality. Finally, his Master's integral vision of the future has suggested to the author's mind a new approach to different aspects of India's cultural evolution. One will read with profit Chapter IV of the book, on "The Vision of Ajanta," where the culture of art has been viewed as a form of spiritual discipline.

The author's—on his own admission—is a psychological approach, which must have its limitations. Within the limits, the author's vision of India is that of a new humanity that is struggling to be born, the progressive manifestation of what Radhakrishnan once described as the world's unborn soul. But if India is to contribute towards the building up of a "new heaven and a new earth," she will have to do it without pride and prejudice.

*Indian States in Free India* : By KEVALRAM OZA. Vora & Co., 3-9, Round Building, Bombay 2. 78 pp. Rs. 2-0-0.

The book under review is marked by a spirit of moderation that sometimes borders on a reactionary tone. The author is of course conscious of the need for reforms in the Indian states. He professes to be in favour of a democratic type of government and wants among other things a linguistic realignment of the units in the Indian Union. But, perhaps, (if at all) he favours reform by steps and the book betrays the lack of a systematic programme, by which the reforms will be realised in actual practice.

It seems that the author has some undue admiration for the Princes as is evinced by his interest in the stability of the Princely Order. Says Mr. Oza : "It is important to note that we cannot lightly dismiss the idea that the Rulers of States can make a solid contribution to the future of India and rise to the essential height of the situation." The book contains frequent references of this nature. But recent happenings in some of the States clearly suggest the fact that the Princely Order is convinced of the need for reform only in times of grave crisis when its own stability is at stake. This is a changing world—a quickly changing world—and we cannot afford to speculate and to depend for long on the possibility of better intentions finally prevailing upon the Princely Order.

Saumitrasankar Das Gupta

*The French in India* By S. P. SEN. Publication of the University of Calcutta, 1947. 360 pp. Price Rs. 7-0-0

This is a connected history of the first establishment of the French in India and their subsequent struggle with other European powers. The author deals with the story of the formation of the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* and its Madagascar enterprise and establishment at Surat. The subsequent chapters of the book deal with the despatch of naval squadrons for the protection of the French interests in the East, their adventures and enterprises and the foundation of Pondicherry. The author's knowledge of French has enabled him to consult a large mass of unpublished French documents as well as published contemporary records bearing on the period and to give a more connected and critical history of the period than what was hitherto possible.

*Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Adyar Library*, Vol VI. Edited By Pandit V. KRISHNAMACHARYA. The Adyar Library 1947. 450 pp. Rs. 25-0-0

The present volume deals with the manuscripts on Grammar, Prosody and Lexicography. In all 1037 manuscripts have been noticed in the Catalogue. The method of classification of the manuscripts is excellent, the manuscripts on Grammar have been classified into Paninian, Prakṛta and others and this required a good deal of discrimination on the part of the author. The notices on important manuscripts are fairly descriptive, not only giving the number of pages, chapters etc. but quoting at times the most significant passages from the text likely to throw light on its authorship or history. Wherever necessary the author has given up-to-date references to published materials.

*Acharya Dhruva Smaraka Grantha* ( Acharya Dhruva Commemoration Volume ) Part II and III. Edited by R. C. PARIKH, B. M. Trivedi, U Joshi. 190 & 260 pp. Rs 8-8-0

The collection has been printed in three parts—part I dealing with the non-English matter and parts II & III dealing with English matter. Acharya Dhruva served the cause of learning not only as a profound scholar of Sanskrit but also as an able administrator, for many years as the Principal of the Gujrat College and then as the Pro-Vicechancellor of the Hindu University at Benares. He has left behind a large number of pupils, friends and admirers and it was in the fitness of things that a representative volume should be published in his commemoration. The volumes contain writings of a large number of distinguished scholars both in the form of reminiscences and erudite contributions. A good number of the contributions is likely to further the cause of research studies in various fields of Indology.

*Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute, Vol VII.*

The Deccan College Research Institute has already established a great reputation specially in the field of linguistic and historical studies. The present volume keeps up the tradition. The first article of this volume is an exhaustive study of the cases of Case variations in the critical edition of the Mahabharata based on the materials supplied by the edition of the Great Epic that is in course of publication by the Bhandarkar Research Institute. This is a very useful study likely to evoke many problems concerning the original text of the Epic. There are besides a number of other interesting articles in the present volume.

P. C. Bagchi

*Self-Restraint Vs. Self-Indulgence* By M. K. GANDHI : Navajiban Publishing House, Ahmedabad : Rs. 2-0-0

This is a new edition, in one volume, of Gandhiji's writings on the problems of sex and marriage, which had till now been issued in two separate volumes. It is remarkably good value for the price. To countless countrymen of his, Gandhiji was a personal friend, philosopher and guide, ever ready to listen to their most intimate problems and to give them practical advice from the wealth of his own experiences during a long life of conscious self-control. He makes the claim that not a single matter not based on personal experience is introduced into the book. Readers of his Autobiography know how much sex was a problem to him and from what an ordinary level of consciousness he had lifted himself to a plane where "one can be as free from excitement in case of contact with the fairest damsel on earth as in contact with a dead body".

Gandhiji had strong convictions on matters connected with sex, but these convictions are stated with suavity and with an openness to consider contradictory points of view. Certain themes recur again and again in these articles which are reprinted from the *Young India* and the *Harijan*, ranging from 1920-1947. The efficacy of *Brahmacharya*, the need for birth-control, but the immorality of artificial methods of control, these are frequently and forcefully asserted, as well as patiently argued with earnest seekers after self-improvement. Divergent opinions on these topics are honestly held by many ardent benefactors of mankind, some of whom like Mrs. Margaret Sanger do appear in these pages. But it cannot be denied that though Gandhiji holds uncompromising views on most of these questions he has not shirked looking at them in all their aspects and his solutions have a cogency and cohesiveness that others often lack. A very helpful book to those who accept the Gandhian outlook on life and are in earnest to tread the path of self-restraint.

*On Tour with Gandhiji* By BHARATAN KUMARAPPA. Aundh Publishing Trust, Aundh. Re 1-0-0.

This little book is a collection of articles, originally contributed to various papers in India, through the National Press Syndicate, by Sri Bharatan Kumarappa, giving vivid pen pictures of Gandhiji during his tour through Bengal, Assam and Madras, from November 1945 to February 1946. Most of the places visited were new to the narrator and therefore the impressions recorded have often the charm of freshness. Such, for example, is the account of Gandhiji's visit, his last, to Santiniketan. "Gandhiji in his loin cloth and at his spinning wheel", observes Sri Kumarappa, "seemed a little out of place in a setting which spoke of ease, leisure and comfort. He represented one side of the picture which is modern India, the side which consists of service and sacrifice for the starving, downtrodden masses struggling to be free from want and oppression, while Santiniketan presented the other side, viz. the charm and beauty which shall be ours when the current of our national life is left free to run its own full course".

To Gandhiji this tour was another of his many pilgrim tours through India whereby he kept close to the heart of the people, an attempt to appraise first hand the situation in the country after the ravages of 1942, to wipe away the tears from the faces of the afflicted and to continue his campaign against untouchability. Everywhere he spoke of the need for better organisation and greater discipline. The tour fittingly ended with a triumphal entry into the far-famed shrine at Palni, which had then recently been thrown open to Harijans.

S. K. G.

*Gandhi's Challenge to Christianity*. Second edition. By S. K. GEORGE. Published by Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad.

It is good to know that this little book, which was first published in England in 1939, has now gone into a 2nd edition, this time in the author's own country. For in spite of the title it would be an error to suppose that the book has relevance chiefly for a western and Christian public. On the contrary the "challenge" that it presents is a far wider one than the title would suggest. It is the challenge of the life and message of Gandhiji to all religious communities and indeed to the entire modern world.

It is a book, therefore, that should be widely read, not only by Christians, but by all thinking people and especially by those who have not yet faced up to the "fact of Gandhi" and its tremendous implications.

For whatever one's attitude may be, whether of approval or disapproval, whether we feel that he has failed or succeeded, the fact remains that he has tried to do something that has never been done before, he has tried to evolve and carry out a programme of political action along the lines of the teachings of the great religious leaders of the world. Therein lies his challenge to Christianity, for his method embodies the great maxims laid down by Jesus and paid lip-

service to by organised Christianity. Therein lies his challenge to all the religions of the world, his own Hinduism no less than the rest.

For the central issue which Gandhiji's life and teaching raise is just this—Must religion remain for ever other-worldly, or can it provide the dynamics and the technique for building the Kingdom of God *on earth*?

Whatever his answer to this question may be (and the last and supplementary chapter of Mr George's book gives evidence that even the author himself has some doubts on the subject) every thoughtful reader will find stimulating matter in this book, especially now when the death of Gandhiji has turned the thoughts of the world in general and of India in particular to seek a fuller understanding of the Man and his Message, and has forced us all to face up to the challenge which they have brought.

Margaret Barr

*The Hero of Hindustan* By ANTHONY ELANJIMATTAM. Orient Book Co., Calcutta.  
Rs. 6-0-0.

The author claims to have written a St. John's Gospel out of authentic records about his hero, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The claim only means that he has taken the utmost liberty with a few conversations he had with, or a few talks he listened to or read about of, Subhas Bose in Europe, to present through them his own views regarding the harmony of religions or the place of religion in politics and kindred themes. Such a method of interpreting ancient masters like Socrates or Jesus, while in keeping with ancient ideas of historical interpretation and justifiable at the hands of master-artists like Plato and St. John, is entirely out of tune with modern canons of literary craftsmanship and grotesque when executed by any but a consummate artist. A book on a modern leader like Subhas Chandra Bose, round whom gather the storms of controversy, has to be cent per cent historical and fully documented to be of any value. To make Subhas Babu and various other characters who figure in this fantastic rignmarole, not excluding Hitler himself, break out into poetry and that the most execrable poetry, if lines cut up without rhyme or reason to look like poetry can be dignified by that name, is to render the whole presentation ridiculous. The author should better have left Netaji alone in seeking to put across his own views on some of the burning questions of Indian polity at the present time—and a good many of his ideas are well worth presentation,—or if he had authentic notes of Netaji's conversations ought to have resorted to a more straightforward presentation of them. His claim to give guidance to the youth of India in facing the hard realities of life, through interludes on fancied Platonic love, is amusingly naive.

The author admits himself to be solely responsible for errors in language and printing and there is much that he has to be responsible for. An altogether



fantastic book, which would never have seen the light of publication, certainly not in its present form, if it had been previously submitted to the judgment of a discerning critic !

REX

*Modern Men in Search of Religion* : By Swami Pabitananda. Published from the Publication Dept. of Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta. Rs. 1-8-0.

Mankind needs to be reminded from time to time that inspite of devastating wars, inspite of science breeding scepticism in the minds of people who think for themselves and politicians advocating commercialism, imperialism or militarism to advance their country's interests, there still remains 'the small voice' in man which urges him to go beyond the limitation of his senses or his country's immediate interests.

It is true that with growing knowledge human intelligence has discarded forms and rituals of his church from time to time, but the essence of the great religions of the world remains intact inspite of scepticism and turmoil of the times.

It is this gospel of Hope that is sought to be preached in this booklet. The author supports his thesis by his wide knowledge of science and psychology. This and the nationalist mode of presentation of his subject will appeal to all men, politicians and scientists included.

What is religion—asks our author. The pious would regard religion as the panacea for all the ills of life while the sceptic would say it is an opiate devised by the higher classes to keep the masses under contented subjection. But the author regards religion as a thing of natural growth, born out of man's urge for freedom from the limitations of his flesh and sense. It is the outer manifestation of his great hunger for the infinite which transcends the bounds of space and time.

Has the world grown less religious—cries the agonised soul. The savagery and the moral disturbance of the two Global wars and the sacrifice of ethical values by politicians to gain their immediate ends, may, perhaps, make one despair of the future of the human race. The author does not share this view. Do we not, says he, hear of protests when an international convention is violated ; do we not see even members of the exploiting nation siding with the exploited in the name of humanity ; do we not find relief operations being carried on by foreigners when a catastrophe overtakes a distant people ? So the author does not despair of the future of the human race, for according to him the essence of religious life consists in purity of heart, a spirit of service, a readiness to sacrifice one's all if the occasion demands it. So long as the problems of human resistance remain, man will continue to be religious though he may give different names to the springs of his action. We commend this booklet to all lovers of humanity for its heartening message.

*Fellowship of Faiths and Unity of Religions.* ED. By PROF. ABDUL MAJID KHAN.  
Published By G. A. Natesan & Co, Madras. Re 1-0-0.

It is a collection of excerpts from Mahatma Gandhi's writings from 1908 down to 1946, showing how throughout this long period of nearly four decades Gandhiji had been striving for unity between the different communities in India,—a unity not merely political but a heart to heart unity through mutual respect for one another's religion.

The work of collection and the writing of the Foreword by Prof. Gurumukh Nihal Singh were completed before the division of India into two Dominions. But the Introduction by Acharya J. B. Kripalini dated 5th Oct., 1947 shows that the collection has a higher aim than preaching a mere political unity. It serves to emphasise the essential unity of all religions ; that is to say, it is a work of enduring interest.

During the past few months, daily prayer meetings in which quotations from different scriptures of the world were recited and Bhajan songs declaring the oneness of Ram and Rahim were sung, formed a special feature of Gandhiji's efforts to bring about communal harmony. Those who have not had the privilege of attending these meetings may find in this book some clue to the inner working of the mind of this great reconciler.

His views were his own ; he did not try to please the orthodox section of any community as his religion was based not on any dogma or ritual. Even his friends and admirers were at times puzzled and sought for elucidation of his views on different religions and on conversion from one to another. But all loved and admired him even when they differed from his views for his was a religion of Love ( Ahimsa ) and Truth. Prof. Abdul Majid Khan has done a service to India by making a collection of Gandhiji's views on the unity of religions available to the reading public. We commend this volume to men of every faith and to every man of faith.

Niladri Shikhar Basu

*Autobiography of a Yogi.* By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA. With a Preface by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, M. A., D. Litt., D. Sc. Published by The Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y., U. S. A., 1946. Demy Octavo, pp. xvi, 498 ; about 50 illustrations on one side of extra leaves appropriately placed. Full cloth \$ 3. 50.

A yogi writes about himself, deviating from the traditions of his class. In India a yogi goes on, as a rule, with practices of yoga ; meditates and teaches more by examples than by precepts ; seldom speaks ; writes still less. So the ordinary busy reader hardly comes across a yogi's own tale. This is probably the first time that a yogi has written his own life story, describing details of the spiritual training received from time to time from his exalted Guru, Sri-Yuktasvara